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Country Life and Country Pursuits

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FIRES IN . . . COUNTRY HOUSES

ON Monday the mansion of Sir Charles Tennant in Peeblesshire was the scene of a very destructive fire, and the occurrence must give great cause of reflection to our readers. Indeed, on another page, it will be found that a correspondent has given adequate expression to the uneasiness engendered by the fires that have occurred so frequently during the last twelve months. It would be superfluous to say to those who are interested in COUNTRY LIFE that many of our mansions are receptacles of some of the most perfect works of art that are in existence. No country in the world possesses so many stately homes as ours; in no country has the passionate care of centuries been so effectively employed to store the rooms with what is noble and precious, and to make the exteriors worthy of them. On the Continent owners have been prevented from doing this by the ravages of war; but, from the time when William the Conqueror won the Battle of Hastings the soil of England has never felt the tread of a hostile army. It is true we are not without data for understanding what might have happened under less fortunate circumstances, because from the destructiveness of a civil war we can guess what it might have been like if foreign legionaries had been allowed to land on our shores. In a comparatively slight degree the Wars of the Roses teach us this, but they were nothing compared with that campaign against beauty and comeliness that was waged by the Puritans under Oliver Cromwell. The fine churches, the noble cathedrals, the stained glass, the sculpture, and painting wrecked by Oliver's rough soldiery are revealed to us in ruin and remnant that show what beautiful things were

once possessed by the English landed gentry. And it will never fail to be a subject of bitter regret that for a period these ruthless enemies of the beautiful were allowed to work their wicked will upon the shrines and homes of this country. Things would have been worse, however, had a foreign enemy ever successfully attacked this island. "Mein Gott, what a city to sack!" was the remark of General Blücher when in the company of his comrade-at-arms, Lord Wellington, he made his first visit to London. After a German sacking what would have remained?

Nor is this all. Compared with the other nations of Europe, England has always been rich, and, until within comparatively recent times, her great aristocrats had little to do with the town, but were *seigneurs* living on their manors and inhabiting mansions which it was their pleasure and delight to adorn with all the works of art that were procurable by means of money, and beautify with all that skill and genius could devise. Thus some of the very houses that have been burnt down had an interest that belonged to the country at large almost as much as to their immediate possessors. At any rate the nation, as a nation, is keenly interested in the preservation of many of the pictures and much of the furniture enclosed within these mansions. It is a matter of national concern that the work of such men as Gainsborough, Reynolds, Hogarth, Romney, and other illustrious painters should be preserved from destruction. Their loss is the national misfortune. We need refer only to a few of the houses that have suffered from fire to establish this point beyond the possibility of cavil. The residence of Sir Charles Tennant in Peeblesshire, the most recent of the victims to fire, contained masterpieces by Etty, Gainsborough, David Cox, Morland, Linnell, Fred Walker, and Roberts, as well as some priceless Worcester china and furniture. Levens Hall, which has been thoroughly illustrated in our own columns, possesses many invaluable curios of one kind and another. To take some more of the places that have been burned, the loss at Great Gaddesden Place, Hemel Hempstead, was estimated at £50,000. At Lord Lindsay's beautiful place, Uffington Hall, where a fire occurred just before Christmas, the valuable pictures were saved, but the fine staircase by Verrie perished. These are but a few of the mansions at which fires have occurred during the last year or so, and why the conflagrations should have been so frequent it is difficult to say. Some trace the cause to the electric lighting. The houses in many cases were fitted with electrical apparatus at a very early stage, when the business was not well understood, and accordingly the precautions which experience has taught us were not put in force.

The important question now is what practical steps can be taken to prevent the recurrence of similar misfortunes in future. Some very useful suggestions will be found in Mr. Peck's letter in another column. For example, much greater care might be exercised in the drawing up of fire insurance policies. These documents are, as a rule, compiled by the companies, who can scarcely be blamed for taking all possible pains to safeguard their own interests. Owners cannot be too earnestly recommended to have the agreements examined by their own solicitors. Mr. Peck tells us that in his experience the compensation for serious loss would always have been greater if the agreement had been properly made. Of course, it may be said that if a Gainsborough or Reynolds is destroyed by fire, though the compensation may be a matter of importance to the owner, it will never make up for the loss; but we may take it as a safe rule, drawn from the operation of human nature, that the more value that is attached to a thing the more care will be taken to guard it; and should it fall a victim to calamity, no pains will be spared to ascertain the reason, and so provide a means for obviating such a thing in future. Then, again, owners of precious heirlooms ought to have an authentic and attested list of them drawn up, because in the *débris* left after a fire many articles are lost because no one knows exactly what to seek for. Nor can this fairly be described as shutting the stable door after the horse is stolen; but, of course, the ordinary precautions against fire should not be neglected. Where the electric installation is old-fashioned it ought at once to be replaced by a new one, because, even if there is some expense, the danger involved renders the outlay necessary. The majority of country houses are fairly well equipped with fire extinguishing apparatus, and here the question is not one of acquiring new machinery, but of getting the servants to attend to it. The danger of fire is one to which the average man or man grows oblivious as day after day passes and nothing happens, and how to keep their vigilance awake is a problem whose solution must depend very much upon the character of the individual owner.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Lady Ruby Elliot, second daughter of the Earl and Countess of Minto.



WITH the usual rites and ceremonies, the Houses of Parliament are to be opened on Tuesday next, and the preparations are already far advanced. The Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne will be moved in the House of Lords by the Marquess of Winchester and seconded by Lord Oranmore and Browne. A similar duty will be performed in the House of Commons by Mr. W. A. Mount, who represents South Berkshire, and seconded by Mr. S. Roberts, who represents the Ecclesall Division of Sheffield. It would be no easy matter to forecast the character of the Session to be opened, but it is easy to see that it may prove very eventful. Both sides are now looking forward to a dissolution at a very early date, and when this is so they are naturally more combative and rhetorical, since it is to their interest to stand before the public as the opponents or advocates of some definite scheme or policy. On the other hand, there is nothing very exciting in home affairs. The questions round which party warfare used to rage, such as retrenchment, enfranchisement, land, and the Church, have ceased to excite those aggressively hostile feelings which distinguished the politics of the eighties. Foreign affairs are, no doubt, in a complicated and difficult position; but the very gravity of the situation in itself precludes it from being made a theme of party discord, since in the events that are taking place in the Far East there is material out of which the flame of a European war might be kindled at any time. We cannot, therefore, believe that the discussions on foreign politics will be very numerous or bitter in the coming Session.

The scriptural phrase "wars and rumours of wars" accurately describes all that we are permitted to know of the proceedings in the Far East; yet the most important rumour is one of peace. It is said, on the authority of a foreign correspondent, that the Ducal party in Russia has come round in favour of an arrangement with Japan. This would be good news if it were true. The whole civilised world has watched with regret and dismay the proceedings in Manchuria, where armies of unprecedented size are confronting one another and engaged from time to time in terrible warfare; and Russia now has no immediate object to serve, since Port Arthur has gone from her, probably for ever; while, unless terms of peace are agreed upon, the scenes transacted before that fortress are likely to be repeated in front of Vladivostock. Meantime the generals of the Czar are disagreeing among themselves, and reports are rife as to the discontent of General Grippenberg, and even of the possible recall of General Kuropatkin. All the time the forces of revolution are threatening internal Russia, so that the burdens laid upon that unhappy country are greater than it can endure.

Mr. R. N. Shaw, of the Meteorological Office, has drawn up a most interesting report to show the relationship between the autumn rainfall and yield of wheat. We cannot quote his figures here, but the general conclusion at which he arrives is that "the yield of wheat goes up as the autumn rainfall goes down, and vice versa." He gives reasons for this connection that will interest all agriculturists. For instance, "the washing of nitrates from the soil by the rain, or the postponement of sowing to the spring, on account of the wet, are no doubt effective." He estimates that, with certain exceptions, "every inch of autumn rainfall involves a diminution of the yield of wheat in the following year by $1\frac{1}{4}$ bushels per acre."

The rise in the price of bread, occurring at a time when the trade of the country is far from being in a prosperous condition, is naturally giving rise to a great deal of anxiety, and some indignation is being expressed at the action taken by the master bakers. Perhaps they are in a little too much of a hurry, since the rise in the price of wheat is not yet very great; and while the price is quoted at 30s. 6d. per quarter, dearer bread ought to

be out of the question. On the other hand, the quotations for wheat have been gradually rising for some time past; and the scarcity in the United States, from which we used to obtain the major part of our supplies, is so considerable that the price of bread was sure to be affected soon or late. We have also to remember that another of the chief sources of supply, Russia, is not likely to send us so much grain in the coming year as she did last year. In the first place, a vast number of cultivators are out at the front; and in the second, a great deal of the home produce will be consumed by sending supplies out to Manchuria. An increase in the price of bread, therefore, appears to us inevitable.

A writer has been protesting in the papers against the abuse of the larger hospitals. These institutions were originally founded for the benefit of the working classes, who now can take very little advantage of them, because, for one thing, the arrangements for dealing with out-patients are not suitable to those who have to earn their daily bread. As a consequence the lower middle classes derive much more advantage from these institutions than the extremely poor. The situation, he says, rights itself, but without the agency of the hospitals. Many skilful doctors are content to work in the poverty-stricken districts, and take only a small fee from those who cannot afford to pay more, while provident dispensaries, unknown fifty years ago, are opening new branches daily, and the smaller hospitals, especially those with evening attendance, are supplanting the larger. He suggests as a remedy for the state of things thus described the multiplication of small hospitals in districts where they are needed. It seems a satisfactory cure for a genuine grievance.

TO THE THRUSH.

Hearts—hers, and mine!—you are singing together
(Tirru! Tirru! Tirru! Chriprivee!),
Loud, clear, and bold in this Valentine weather.
Hearts—hers, and mine!—you are singing together,
So debonair in your suit of new feather
(Chirri! Chirri! Chirri! Que-que-que!).
Hearts—hers, and mine!—you are singing together
(Tirru! Tirru! Tirru! Chriprivee!).

ROSAMOND NAPIER.

The agitation against the rural building bye-laws continues to crop up in almost every direction, and even local bodies themselves are displaying an admirable tendency to forestall the reform that is certainly impending. We do not imagine that there will be any difficulty now in securing such a body of public support as will ensure a radical change, and members of Parliament will only be too glad to lend their support to a popular movement. But the danger is that some merely ameliorating measure should be hastily pushed through Parliament, and the opportunity lost for reconstructing the arrangements altogether. This would be a pity, because the whole of the agitation would have to be gone over again before another step could be taken, and it is evident that the occurrences that have had Sir William Grantham's case for a centre ought to lead to the introduction of important changes into our system of local government. In the future it will be necessary to distinguish between the functions which a local body can fittingly and adequately discharge, and those which it ought not to be asked to perform. In other words, the business of surveying and inspecting ought to be performed from a county centre, not from the village where the builder of a cottage is almost sure to be a near neighbour of the official.

An interesting experiment has been made by the Henley Fisheries Association. They have put down 100 trout in the local waters of the Thames, and each of these fish has had attached to its tail a little silver tablet regularly numbered. It is hoped by this means to obtain some information as to the migratory habits and rate of growth of trout under natural conditions. All anglers ought to be requested to take note that the markings are from H 01 to H 0100, as their co-operation will be necessary to the identification of any that are subsequently caught. The experiment ought to prove most useful, because, in spite of the closest attention and the study bestowed upon the subject by many eminent men, we are yet very much in the dark as to the true habits of the inhabitants of the water.

In the interests of all salmon anglers, as well as from other points of view, it is to be hoped that the representations of the County Councils of Herefordshire and Radnorshire will have some effect in checking the contemplated robbery of water, for the Birmingham water scheme, from the beautiful river Wye. There is to be presented to Parliament a Bill, called the Birmingham Water Bill, by which it is sought to obtain powers, in agreement with the Wye Conservators' Board, to reduce, in consideration of a sum of £8,000 to be paid to the Board, the amount of compensation water previously agreed to be restored

to the river, by some 7,000,000 gal. Only those who have seen to what a shallow depth this lovely river used to be reduced, even before the construction of the water-works at Rhayader, can appreciate what the loss of this amount must mean to the stream in a dry year. So much money has been spent recently, and with such excellent result on the up-river angling, in buying up the nets at the mouth of the Wye, that it will be exceedingly hard on the up-river proprietors if all their outlay is to be brought to non-effect by the sapping of the sources of the river. The County Councils mentioned have resolved to do all in their power to prevent the passage of the Bill.

The invaluable service rendered to human life by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution is well brought out by the returns of the Board of Trade for the last year under review. Though the cases of entire loss of vessels amounted to 1,290 in the year, there was a loss of life in less than a hundred cases, the total of the death-roll being 339. Of the rest of the crews and passengers of these vessels, as well as many others belonging to ships which were not total wrecks, a very large proportion owe their preservation to the lifeboats maintained by the society and its supporters, and to the heroic service of their crews. During the past half-century the tables of the society show that, while 34,575 lives were saved by the lifeboats, the number of lives lost in wrecks round our shores was 31,610. The number of lifeboats in use at the end of this period was of course much greater than at the beginning, and the proportion of lives saved is consequently very much higher, and is still increasing.

To use a much-hackneyed phrase, a link with the past has been broken by the death of Mr. Thomas Coates at the ripe age of eighty-eight. He was the oldest tenant of the late Lord Beaconsfield, and full of memories of the distinguished visitors who used to come to visit the famous statesman and look at his peacocks on the lawn, or walk with him under the famous beeches in the park. He was a man who understood what may be called the politics of agriculture exceedingly well, and Lord Beaconsfield had the utmost confidence in his opinions, and frequently consulted him when difficult questions arose in the party conflicts of the hour. For nearly half a century Mr. Coates had been churchwarden of Hughenden, and the last years of his life were spent in a house allotted to him by Mr. Coningsby Disraeli, situated not far from the burial-place of his late landlord.

All lovers of bits of old London life will regret that the construction of the new thoroughfare from Buckingham Palace through to Trafalgar Square involves the disappearance of the two milk-sellers' stalls at the eastern end of the Mall, which with their cows tethered by them made all the summer such a pleasant and homely picture under the trees in the very midst of London. "Milk Fair," the old name by which it was often called, has been established by the side of the Mall ever since the time of James I., by whose permission the site is said to have been granted for this purpose to the lineal ancestors of the two old women who keep the stalls to-day, and for several generations relations of the present holders have been servants in the Royal Family. In recent years the two plain little stalls in the Park, with their slender stream of leisurely custom, seemed a typical picture of what now appears the oddly simple life of polite London in the early Victorian period, and they had a special attraction of their own for this reason.

A brief but rather an ominous announcement is issued by the Ski Club of Great Britain, to the effect that owing to the scarcity of snow the ski-jumping competition at Christiania has been postponed from February 6th to February 27th. No doubt this is disappointing reading for the amateurs of ski-running, but at the same time it is very disappointing in its significance to all those who have interests in salmon angling in Norway, and compose a larger class than the select members of the ski-runners. Last season in Norway was a very poor one indeed for salmon. It does not follow, from the relative absence of snow, that a season need of necessity be poor, but it does follow that it must be short, so that if it is to be good much must be done in little time. Neither does it follow, perhaps, that because there is a little snow up to the end of January there may not be much before the winter is over; but so far as the season has gone the signs are bad, and Norway needed an especially good season this year to retrieve her credit.

Mr. H. J. Mackinder's lecture at the Compatriots' Club on "Man-power as a Measure of National Strength" was distinctly interesting and suggestive, and its interest was emphasised by the subsequent comments of Sir Francis Younghusband, who occupied the chair. The first asset of the Empire was computed by the lecturer as 42,000,000 islanders and some 10,000,000 of the same race elsewhere distributed. But the measure was not one of quantity only, but of quality also, as Sir Francis Younghusband brought out by a comparison of the present condition of Africa with its probable condition if it had been peopled by an

industrious, intelligent race like the Chinese. The object of the lecture was in the main to urge the Imperial importance of keeping the supply of man-power at the highest possible point, numerically, physically, and intellectually.

A Polar bear is probably the last animal which anyone would expect to die of cold, but the death of one of these beasts in the Zoological Gardens at Chicago is attributed to this cause. The United States have been suffering from a "cold wave," which has advanced, in a south-easterly direction, even as far as Florida, where great damage has been done to the orange groves, and the Polar bear at Chicago is believed to have succumbed to the Arctic temperature. Though this species, in captivity, ordinarily finds severe frost as congenial as hot summer weather is distressing, it is by no means impossible that, after twenty-three years spent in the Chicago gardens, the white bear fell a victim to a sudden change of temperature of a kind to which the species in a wild state is, after all, not accustomed.

THE GREATER WEALTH.

I am not rich with this world's gold,
Nor land of wide possession hold;
But I have treasure more divine
Than all the gems that brightest shine;
For in my spirit I possess
The whole of Nature's loveliness,
And do, by virtue of my sight,
Enjoy in her prescriptive right,
Vouchsafed by Him who gave to me
The ears to hear, the eyes to see.
The gentle breezes wrap me round
With lullabies of summer sound,
And in my happy soul I wear
The freshness of the morning air,
The beauty of the fields, the grace
Of many a green and leafy place,
The glamour of the golden noon,
The wonder of the stars and moon,
The glory that is in a sky
That stretches to Infinity.
So in my soul I have such health
As comes of lovely thoughts, such wealth
As sweet contentment gives, such store
Of freedom, angels have no more.
For in the purity of flowers
I see the everlasting hours,
And in the sunset's living gold
What far surpasses wealth behold;
And past the crimson clouds espy
The mansions of Eternity.

R. G. T. COVENTRY.

In the account of the extraordinary voyage of adventure made by Lord Anson in the earlier half of the eighteenth century, the then state of the island of Juan Fernandez is described minutely. Anson and his chaplain wrote this narrative, which is very restrained throughout. Their squadron made the island their rendezvous after rounding Cape Horn, and there found that some of the goats mentioned in the narrative of Alexander Selkirk were still on the island. There had been a great number, but the Spaniards, finding that these goats were useful food for the crews of pirate vessels, had landed large dogs and left them there to pull down the goats. They had greatly reduced their numbers, but a few herds were left. One of these, headed by an immense old bearded billy goat, was being chased by dogs when Anson's crew landed. The goats fled to a place in the rocks over which there was only one narrow neck of ground, with a precipice on either side. Here the old goat turned and "kept the bridge," and the dogs, not daring to face him, drew off. Unfortunately, this goat was shot later. It was evidently very old, and had its ears slit. Lord Anson notes that Selkirk had slit the ears of some kids he tamed, and surmised that this may have been one of his tame goats.

Among the furze-tipped hills and coombs near Sidmouth in Devon, roedeer were once occasionally found. A correspondent writes to say that a roebuck was seen not long ago in this district, and is probably there still. The increase of roe in England (as apart from Scotland) is very interesting. Possibly, pheasant preserving helps them, though where there are foxes roe seldom thrive, the fawns being killed by the latter. In parts of the division of Dorsetshire, which has just been the scene of a rather memorable election, roe are now so common that they have to be shot down. We believe that six were recently shot in a day. There are also two centres close to London where roe have been introduced and have maintained themselves—in Epping Forest and Copnall Woods on the east, and in the woods near Sunningdale on the south-west. It would be a good plan to turn some out in the New Forest, and in Sherwood Forest. Parts of Wales also suggest themselves as good places in which to establish roebuck.

STEPPING WESTWARD.

"What, you are stepping westward?" "Yea."

'Twould be a wildish destiny
If we, who thus together roam
In a strange land, and far from home,
Were in this place the guests of chance:
Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,
Though home or shelter he had none,
With such a sky to lead him on?

The dewy ground was dark and cold;
Behind, all gloomy to behold;
And stepping westward seemed to be
A kind of heavenly destiny.
I liked the greeting; 'twas a sound

Of something without place or bound;
And seemed to give me spiritual right
To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake
Was walking by her native lake;
The salutation had to me
The very sound of courtesy:
Its power was felt; and while my eye
Was fixed upon the glowing sky,—
The echo of the voice enwrought
A human sweetness with the thought
Of travelling through the world that lay
Before me in my endless way."



Col. W. H. Mason:

THE DEPARTING LIGHT.

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HOW the hopes and fears of men have been guided in their expression by the simplest of natural phenomena is one of those harmonies which, when rightly seen, lie all about the existence of man. Because the sun rises in the East, in the "deep and shining Orient" lies all the romance of hope. It was, according to Biblical and other legends, in the East that the first human family was founded. The Eden of Christian folk was there, and there, too, existed the Golden Age which was sung of by the Greek and Latin poets. Out of the East, since the beginning of the world, have come the wise men, the magicians, and the conquerors. In fact, old superstitions seem again to be in the way of fulfilment to-day, when the youngest of all nations has sprung up with a meteoric splendour that already outdazzles and almost threatens to overwhelm the Occident. But there is a romance as deep and much more pathetic in the land of the sunset. The natural fact is in itself so magically exquisite, we cannot wonder that it has given rise to parable and metaphor. After coming up in its early faint silvery brightness from the sea, and rolling, as it were, over the great plain of Heaven till eventide, the sun, as seen by the untutored eye, sinks at last into the depths of the West, sending forth, as if to celebrate its own funeral, flying and variegated clouds like the standards and oriflammes of a mighty army. Nightly they appear and nightly they fade away, so that it is no wonder if poets and dreamers have attached a mystical meaning to this daily death. To them in their rapt and ecstatic moments those beautifully-coloured clouds seem like the outward barriers and the gates of that land of peace and rest which weariness opens up to the eye of the thinker and dreamer. The whole

feeling is finely expressed at the end of what we had almost called the one supreme poem left us by the poet Longfellow, when Hiawatha "launched his birch canoe for sailing," and whispering to it, "Westward, westward," departed into that land of the setting sun where the dreams and hopes of men appear to have their appropriate end. Whoever has on a fair summer evening watched this common phenomenon will value the splendid interpretation of the signs that follows. We have:

"the birch canoe seemed lifted
High into that sea of splendour,
Till it sank into the vapours,
Like the new moon slowly, slowly
Sinking in the purple distance."

Then in the words of another and very different poet: "Take it and try its worth, here dies another day." But how beautifully does Longfellow picture that delicious time which follows the sunset:

"And the forests, dark and lonely,
Moved through all their depths of darkness,
Sighed, 'Farewell, O Hiawatha!'
And the waves upon the margin
Rising, rippling on the pebbles,
Sobbed, 'Farewell, O Hiawatha!'
And the heron the Shuh-shuh-gah,
From her haunts among the fen-lan ls,
Screamed, 'Farewell, O Hiawatha!'"

Yes! If the romantic beginnings of things are all in the East, then the islands of the blest are, and ever will be, in the West. Tennyson used to say that the most exquisite passage of poetry

composed by his predecessor in the laureateship, William Wordsworth, was:

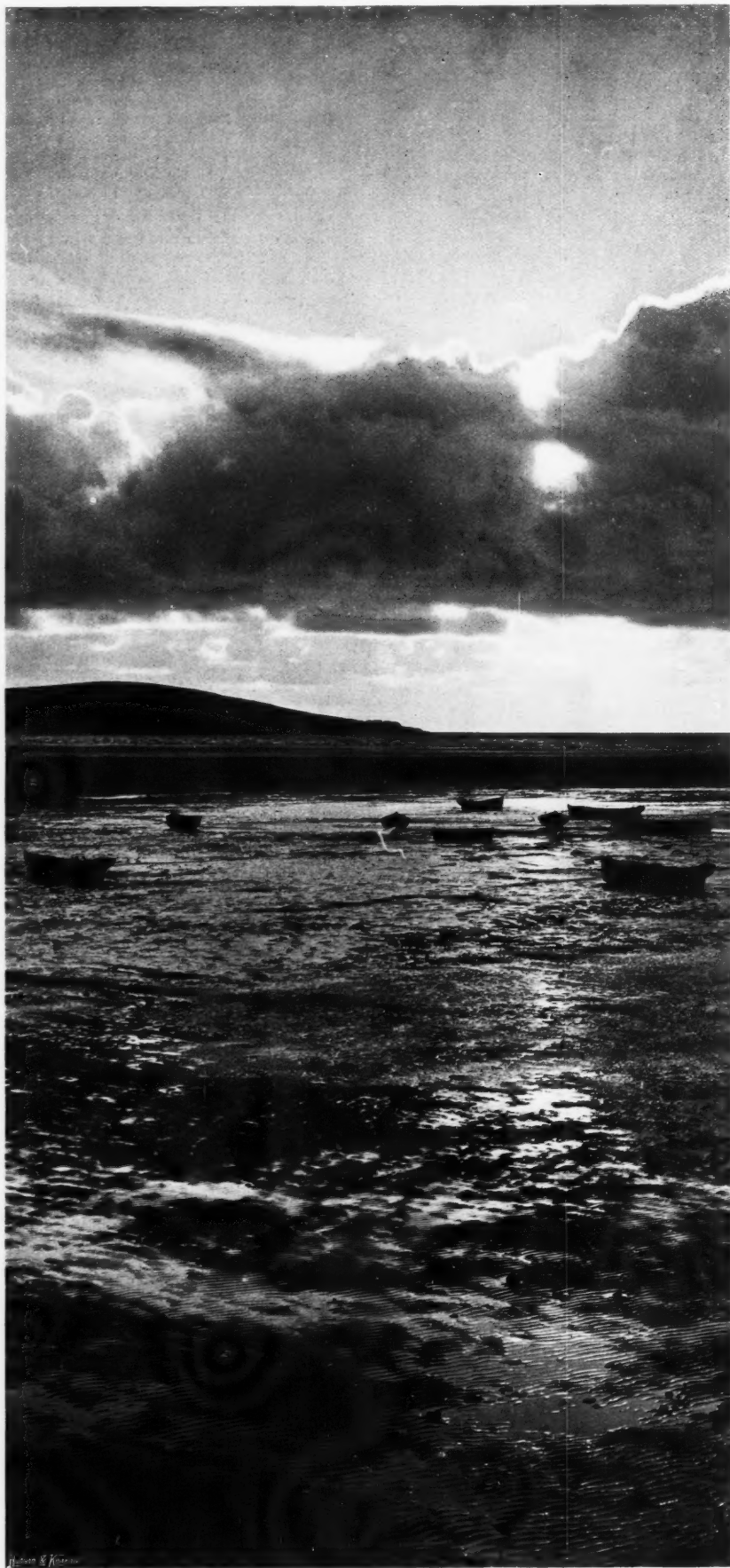
"Her dwelling was the light of setting suns,"

and it is doubtful if anyone in literature has ever hit upon a more perfect expression.

Sunset, wherever it is seen, is equally beautiful, but it varies with the character of the scenery. One remembers in old days among the hills how the deep glen, with the trout stream running down the middle of it, darkened suddenly, even in the long days of summer, as the sun dipped behind some outstanding peak. Then the bleating of the sheep began to mingle with the murmur of running water. The curlew's eerie cry seemed to fall among the shadows, and as dusk crept over mountain and valley, every sound was gradually hushed, till the stars shone on utter silence. The labourers at the various farms in the neighbourhood used to blow a foddering horn just about night-fall, and this sound, with the occasional yelp of a dog or the howl of a hill fox, the hooting of an owl or the song of some late bird, were all that broke the stillness. Down in the river valley, where the hills looked remote and unreal, and lay like a blue mysterious rampart circling the landscape, the sunset was longer and more glorious. There the sun dipped slowly, like a silvery sphere, till it touched the horizon and turned to molten gold that gradually fell and fell till the rising ground concealed it. Only then was the full beauty of the sunset apparent, for the red and changing clouds spread across the sky, and assumed bit by bit a thousand fine grades of colour, crimson and purple and orange, till they faded away in bands of light whose radiance slowly decreased until the fields of heaven lay in darkness and were sown with stars, "patines of bright gold." The writer's memory of these long summer nights is mingled with a thousand homely associations: two or three tired children still playing cricket, though the going down of the sun ordered them to rest, a band of swifts chasing one another furiously, as these birds will, in a circle round a

Border tower, and a general feeling of peace that seemed to spread over the valley with the sober twilight. The feeling of the scene is admirably rendered by our picture "In her Sober Livery," though the place itself is

strange to the writer. But hills such as those he knew, and the water was as clear and the bulrushes as tall and their reflections as well defined. Yet it is in no particular feature that the charm lies, but in the feeling that the picture carries with it—the sense of coming rest. Our other illustrations are from the sea, and the sea and the sun have a natural association. These scenes come to one's mind like a memory. How often has the same pair of eyes watched the fishing boats return at night to the harbour. A narrow river guarded by a long pier crept down to the sea that stretched illimitably outwards, with the last rays of the sun falling on it. In daylight it had been ever mutable, changing from green to a hundred other colours, but as the sun died the water darkened. Often, too, according to the fishermen, the wind goes down then, and the little wavelets ripple and break with the softest crooning. Meantime, the boats have all turned their keels to the harbour, trying to sail as long as there is a capful of wind, but eventually the men take to the oars and row as their Viking forefathers did before them. Tired and healthy they make their way up stream, mingling one hardly knows how with the inanimate world, and melting into the landscape until they actually seem to form part of it. As darkness comes, the lighthouse lamps are lit, and as they revolve flash a warning signal to ships that pass in the night. At sea more than anywhere else one feels, I think, the mystery of night. The heavens seem wider, the stars more innumerable, and the sorry wind itself is not more melancholy than the lapping of water in darkness. But there are other parts of the coast where effects of a kind are produced. One of them might have been taken



Col. W. H. Mason.

SAND RIDGES.

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the "Lotos Land" of Tennyson, where the mild-eyed, melancholy lotos-eaters "sat them down between the sun and moon upon the shore." No doubt Tennyson caught this vision at Mablethorpe.



W. R. Kay.

"IN HER SOBER LIVERY."

Copyright.



Col. W. H. Mason.

THE LAST GLEAM OF SUNLIGHT.

Copyright

in Lincolnshire. The place is only a few miles from Somersby, where his boyhood sung

"Long since its matin song, and heard
The low love-language of the bird
In native hazels tassel-hung."

The little whitewashed house on the seaside where Tennyson spent his summer holidays is still to be seen, and though much else has changed, the encroaching sea is exactly what it appeared to his eyes. Perhaps it is a loss to literature that he could not in those impressionable young days behold the sun descending into the sea. It set on the land, and though the wind

has formed sand-dunes there as abundantly as on the west, and though the long, level, imperceptibly sloping coast is susceptible to many touches of light and shade, not visible elsewhere, sunset by the German Ocean could not be as striking a phenomenon as it is on the broad bosom of the Atlantic. Perhaps the only place on the whole of the East Coast where a sunset may be seen to full advantage is on the Island of Lindisfarne, and this in large measure is due to the peculiarity of the situation, and the wide area of sand covered when the tide is full. But even there the sun cannot be said to drop into the sea, and those who live on the opposite side of England have



A. H. Avery.

HOME FROM THE SEA.

Copyright

much more chance of forming beautiful associations of the going down of the sun upon the "unharvested." Along the low-lying, sandy shore of Lancashire the sunset on the water can be seen in its utmost splendour. When you come near the ending of a long, bright day, and a blue canopy is spread above the blue sea, there is a period in the evening when the shadows of man and beast lengthen out on the sandy dunes, and the sun, though his brightness is still undimmed, descends slowly towards the water, his radiance brightening every ripple and billow of the restless sea. As he dips towards the edge of the



Col. W. H. Mason.

THE FOUR ELEMENTS.

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horizon, he suddenly reddens like a leaping flame, and the crimson spreads away from him in great lakes and continents of colour that, as they mount up the sky, fade and change into a million of bright harmonies that would beggar the vocabulary of the poet to find names for and the palette of the painter to represent. And now the sky is blue no longer, but flecked and mottled with the softest and most translucent pinks that spread over the whole field of vision. Then the light fades into a soft crepuscule, the landscape darkens, and night, the primeval, dwells once more on the face of the waters.

TREDINGTON.

AS the carrier's cart drove over the old bridge across the Avon, I saw through its little window, against the fading red of the sunset sky, the steeple of Shakespeare's church, and the blurred outline of the memorial theatre. The lucid Avon held each delicate twig of the leafless trees in an unwavering reflection. The long waggon with the two horses rumbled on, stopping at each village with papers and parcels, and the old carrier hopped out and in

with astonishing agility. Possibly some of the inns gave him the wherewith to loosen the joints within his very tight nether garments. There was a great searching for packages, in the box-seat, under the passengers' legs, in among the straw, on the roof; out and in skipped the carrier, up and down went elastic and inelastic traveller. In the darkness an anxious ruddy dame would loom forth largely under a big white or speckled sun-bonnet, though the season seemed most inappropriate for



B. Moore.

THE FORD

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THE MILL.

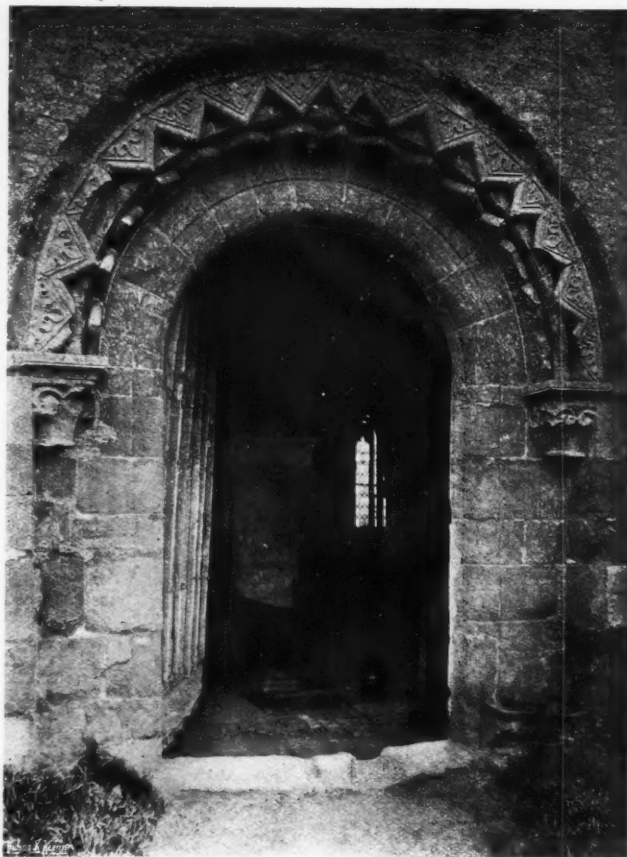
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such headgear, with the glittering frosty stars above and the ringing roads below. She would enquire anxiously for her parcel, and behind her, the light, the glow of oil and coal that knew not yet that the white day of electricity had for ever dimmed its benefaction to mankind, twinkled through the leaded casement of her cottage. "Two papers to-night?"

Well, I've no more left, missis," showed that the war—it could not surely be a football match—was being watched in remote England; at least, the unexpected demand for papers argued an interest in the news that the carrier had not expected. An ancient farmer sat back in the corner, secure from the draught, under the flickering candle lantern, with his feet well down in the straw, and poured forth plaintive memories on the prices which barley and wheat brought in the fifties and sixties. His auditor was a burly farmer, redder than a windy morn, who belonged to the younger tillers of the soil; and as the old man's hand came with feeble accentuation on his sleeve, he assented with sympathetic groans and monosyllables. "Mind ye, it was fifty-two shillings a quarter, fifty-eight shillings a quarter, and ye know what we've come to now!" The ruddy listener, who had all the dimensions of the man in the six overcoats, nodded responsively, and if he had a smile at all those lamentations of crabbed and pathetic age, he concealed it courteously somewhere in his genial and capacious depths. They were the only passengers till the lordly gates of a mansion house appeared, and, as the cart creaked up, the lodge door opened, and along its lighted

path there hobbled forth an attenuated figure—a serving-man of a bygone generation, bowed with eld—who climbed painfully on to the seat by the driver. Shivering, in his tightly-buttoned, meagre clothes, his white, peaked face seemed to come and go by the wavering lantern like some poor, forgotten ghost's. Scraps of his conversation penetrated the gloom of the caravan.

"You could never have seen a better; it fair broke my heart to see the way she went." "That night, as I passed the door, I heard a moan." "Forty years since, and her like I haven't cast eyes on." Do not think the charms or frailties of a deceased beauty were his topic; it was evident a favourite and forgotten mare lived in his thoughts. Presently he got down—rather, he let himself down, with obvious pain and stiffness—at a poor cottage by the wayside. "Good night, Tom," cried the carrier, and cracked his whip. I leaned out, and saw still standing, hardly straightened up yet, the forlorn, shrivelled figure of the ex-groom. He gave the impression of a faded and unprosperous Simon Lee. At last Tredington was reached. There was no accommodation at the village inn—the journey had already occupied nine hours, over about fifty miles as the crow flies—and I had again to get into the cart, and finally found a lodging in Shipston-on-Stour, two miles further on. Those who go to Tredington would need two days at their disposal, for fleeting time gets cornered in such secluded haunts, and is oblivious of the main lines of railways and hurrying feet. However useful it is to be able to propel one's self by leg-power,



B. Moore.

SOUTH DOOR OF THE CHURCH.

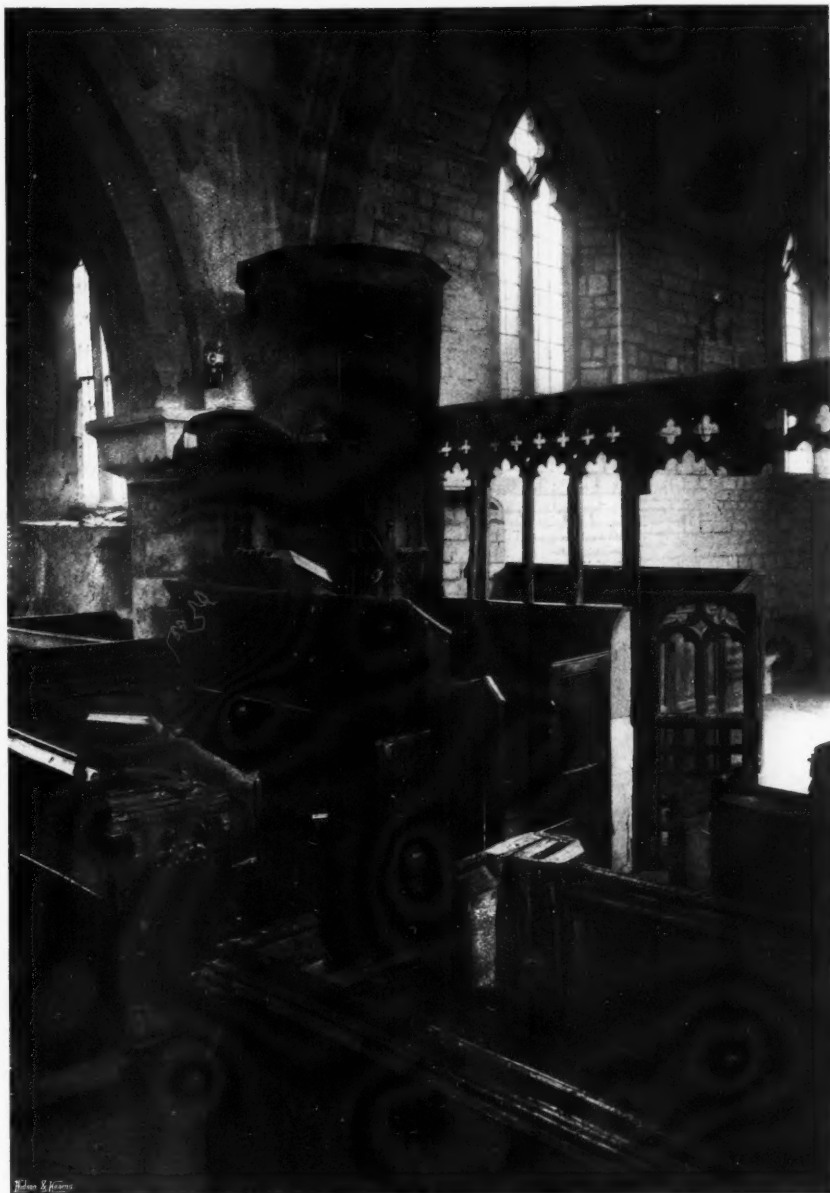
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it is inadequate means for those who wish to go "there and back" in a day in the manner of present sightseers, and horses, motor-cars, and cycles are not always available or suitable.

Tredington lies in the valley of the Stour, nine miles from Stratford and two from Shipston. It is a mere hamlet clustering about one of the finest old churches in England. It shows but half a face to the high road, for most of the houses that hold its 150 inhabitants are on the lower ground near the river, where are two mills, one of which is reproduced. The walnut tree and the pear tree look down on the mill-wheel, and along the banks where the water slides into the Stour again are the shells of immemorial willows. The ground has reeded from many of them, and the wild fantastic roots are displayed curling upwards and downwards. The Stour winds about through the greenest meadows that ever blessed the eye, and lined by rows of those ancient pollards up whose hollow trunks still creeps sufficient life to make grey leafage on the bunch of twigs that crown them. In the early morning, when the hoar frost shone on the red ivy that carpeted the woods through which the Stour finds its lingering way, nothing more beautiful, nothing fairer or kinder on English land, could there be. An unknown river, retired from the world, and yet later joined in the Avon to all that is dearest and most inspiring in the life and memory of England, it moves in silver and untroubled mood through its youth.

The village, surrounded by its mud walls, sleeps, thatched and mossy, far from the high road of traffic. The church dates from Saxon times, a fine and imposing pile. A beautiful Norman doorway is represented. In another porch the wooden door is pierced by the bullets of Cromwell's soldiers, a skirmish having taken place outside the village with a body returning from Edgehill. In the church are two well-preserved brasses of early rectors of Tredington. The three-decker Elizabethan pulpit, magnificently carved, has been reduced at the time of the alterations to the ordinary dimensions of to-day. The reading-desk has still the chains which once held the Bible and book of sermons. The old books of the time of James still lie there, yellow and worn. The carved pews date from the fourteenth century, and the old boxes and galleries which had spoiled the grace and symmetry of the church were taken away at the Restoration. The roof of the side aisle was beginning to fall in, and decay was eating in everywhere, when Sir Arthur Blomfield came to the rescue. Now the unique mixture of architecture can be studied through each change from Saxon onward. A couple of windows in the rectory are worth seeing. They are all that remains of the house built for the priest in the fourteenth century, and in their carved casement are to be seen in rich colours three coats-of-arms—those of Archbishop Cranmer, of Wadham College, and of some rector who centuries ago

ruled the little hamlet. The parish was once large, when 2,000 were held in the church, but now the congregation is about 100. There has been, it could be imagined, no change at Tredington for 1,000 years. The railway has never reached it, there are no shops, no hotels, only an ancient inn, and this last year a steam-tram runs twice a day from Stratford to Shipston. Yet lovelier hill and dale the Midlands cannot boast of. The woods often clothe considerable heights, and the Stour winds about among the pollard willows in green sequestered meadows.



B. Moore.

THE PULPIT.

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WINTER STARS.

By FIONA MACLEOD.

OF all winter stars surely the most familiar is Polaris, the Pole Star or Lodestar: of all winter Constellations, the Plough, the Little Dipper (to give the common designations), Orion, and the lovely cluster of the Pleiades, are, with the Milky Way, the most commonly observed stellar groups. One of our old Scottish poets, Gawain Douglas, writing towards the close of the fifteenth or early in the sixteenth century, thus quaintly brought them into conjunction—

"Arthur's hous, and Hyades betakning rane,
Watling strete, the Horne and the Charlewane,
The fiers Orion with his goldin glave."

Here possibly he has taken Arcturus for Polaris. Of old, the Lodestar and Arcturus (or, as often given in the North, "Arturus" or "Arthur" . . . a word itself signifying the Great or Wondrous Bear) were often confused. Sometimes, too, Arcturus stood for the whole constellation of Ursa Major—or, as

we commonly call it, the Plough or the Wain, as, for example, in Scott's lines:

"Arthur's slow wain his course doth roll,
In utter darkness, round the Pole."

But it is obvious Gawain Douglas did not mean this to be understood, for in the second line he speaks of "Charlewane," i.e., Charles's Wain . . . the Wain or Waggon being then, as it still is among country-folk, even more familiar a term than the Great Bear or than the Plough itself. Probably, then, he had in mind the Pole Star, the "House of Arthur" of the ancient British. His choice of the "rain-betokening Hyades" may be taken here as including the Pleiades, these "greater seven" to whom was devoted an article in COUNTRY LIFE in November. More recently another article dealt with the Milky Way, so that there is no need to explain why Watling Street should be analogous with the Galaxy. The "Horne" is the Little Dipper or Ursa Minor. Than "fierce Orion with his

glistering sword" there is no constellation so universally familiar. If, then, to this category of the old Scottish poet, we add the star Aldebaran, and the constellation of Taurus or the Bull, we have more than enough Winter Lights to consider in a brief paper.

Having already, however, devoted an article to the Pleiades we can be the more content now to ignore Alcyone, Maia, Taygeta, Electra, and the other Pleiadic stars of Taurus. This great constellation is one of the earliest in extant astronomical records: the earliest, it is believed. The stellar image of a Bull has occurred to many nations since the designation first arose among the ancient Cretans or Akkadians—if, indeed, in its origin it was not immeasurably more remote. East and West, in the deserts of the South and among the grey isles of the North, "the Bull" was recognised. To-day the Scottish peasant still calls it "the Steer," as his German kinsman does in *der Stier*, his French kinsman in *le Taureau*, his Spanish or Italian kinsman in *Toro*. When certain of the Greeks and Latins used *Keráon* and *Cornus* instead of *Taurus* and *Taurus*, they said merely the same thing—the Horned One. Virgil, as many will remember, utilises the image in the first "Georgic":

"When with his golden horns bright Taurus opes
The year . . ."

just as a poet of our own time, in a beautiful "Hymn to Taurus," writes:

" . . . I mark, stern Taurus, through the twilight grey
The glinting of thy horn
And sullen front, uprising large and dim
Bent to the starry Hunter's sword at bay."

Among our own ancestors, the Druids made Taurus an object of worship, the Tauric Festival having been one of the great events of the year, signalled when the sun first entered the imagined frontiers of this constellation. To-day, among the homesteads of our Scottish lowlands, the farm-folk tell of the Candlemas Bull who may be seen to rise in the gloaming on New Year's Eve and move slowly to the dark pastures which await his coming.

The particular stellar glory of this constellation is Aldebaran. This beautiful star has appealed to the imagination of all peoples. I do not know what were its earliest Celtic or Anglo-Saxon names. But as in Gaelic it is sometimes called "the Hound," this term may well be a survival from ancient days. If so, there is an interesting relation with the primitive Arabic name by which it is all but universally known. Aldebaran is *Al Dabarān*, the Follower: and, figuratively, a follower could hardly be better symbolised than by a hound. I recall a Gaelic poem on a legendary basis where the analogy is still further emphasised, for there Aldebaran is called "the Hound of the Pleiades," which is exactly what the Arabian astronomers implied in "the Follower." Another interesting resemblance is between "the red hound" of the Gaelic poet and legend and the *Rohini* of the Hindūs, that word signifying "a red deer." . . . in each case the ruddy gleam of the star having suggested the name. Probably it was this characteristic which led Ptolemy to apply to the star the name "Lampadius" or the Torch-Bearer. In the narration of folk-tales I have more than once or twice heard Aldebaran alluded to as the star of good fortune, of "the golden luck." With us it is pre-eminently a winter-star, and may be seen at its finest from the latter part of January till the approach of the vernal equinox. Some idea of its luminosity may be gained from the fact that this is thrice the outglow of the Pole Star. How often I have stood on a winter's night, and watched awhile this small red "torch" burning steadfastly in the unchanging heavens, and thought of its vast journeys, of that eternal, appalling procession through the infinite deeps: how often I have felt the thrill of inexplicable mystery when, watching its silent fire in what appears an inexorable fixity, I recall what science tells us, that it is receding from our system at an all but unparalleled velocity, a backward flight into the unknown at the rate of thirty miles a second.

It would be hopeless to attempt here even the briefest account of the primitive and diverse nomenclature, the mythology, the folk-lore of Orion . . . the Winter-Bringer, as this constellation is called in an old Scandinavian saga, identical thus with the marginal reading in the Geneva Bible relative to the reference to Orion in Job—"which starre bringeth in winter," an allusion to its evening appearance at the season of cold and storms. For these things are writ in the records of a hundred nations. They are alive in the poetry of all peoples. Centuries before our era, when Thebes was the greatest city of Greece, the poetess Corinna sang of this great Warrior, the Great Hunter, whose nightly course was so glorious above the dusky lands and waters of Hellas. Long after Pindar and the Greek poets, Catullus and Horace gave it a like pre-eminence in Latin literature. In our own poetry, many surely will recall from "Paradise Lost":

" . . . when with fierce winds Orion arm'd
Hath vex'd the Red-sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew
Busiris and his Memphian chivalry . . ."

or Tennyson's beautiful line in "Locksley Hall":

"Great Orion sloping slowly to the west . . ."

or, it may be, that epic of "Orion" upon which is based Richard Hengist Horne's claim to remembrance—or, once more, Matthew Arnold's fine allusion to Sirius and Orion in "Sohrab and Rustum":

" . . . the Northern Bear,
Who from her frozen height with jealous eye
Confronts the Dog and Hunter in the South."

Before Catullus or Pindar the Egyptians had identified Orion both with Horus and Osiris. Among the peoples of Israel the poets acclaimed the constellation as Nimrod, "the mighty Hunter" (or by another term signifying the Giant), "bound to the sky for rebellion against Jehovah." Among the Celtic races it has had kindred names, sometimes abstract, sometimes personal, as the Gaelic *Fionn*. A year or so ago I was told a sea-tale of the Middle Isles, in which was an allusion to this constellation as The Bed of Diarmid. This is of especial interest, because of its connection with Fionn or Finn, the Nimrod, the great Hunter of the Gael. But in this story (a modern, not an ancient tale, though with more than one strange old survival) the major position is not held by Fionn, but by the Alban-Gaelic hero Diarmid, who is represented as succumbing under the spear thrust in his left side by the enraged Fionn, at last in grips with the daring chieftain who had robbed him of Grania. When questioned, my informant said he had heard a variant of this attribution, and that the constellation was an image of Diarmid with Grania hanging to his side in a swoon, because she and her lover have been overtaken by the wrath of Fionn . . . though from the description I could not make out whether the latter indicated the star Sirius, or the rival constellation of the Great Bear. The Gaels of old called Orion *Caomai*, a name said to signify the Armed King: while the *Gall* (the Scandinavian races) applied the name *Orwandil*, but with what signification I do not know, though I have read somewhere that it stood for Hero, or for an heroic personage.

Of the chief stars in Orion there is not space here to speak. But of the splendid Rigel—as affluent in the mysterious science of the astrologer as in nocturnal light—pearly Anilam, of the Belt—ominous Bellatrix—ruddy-flamed Betelgeuze—of these alone one might write much . . . as one might write much of the Girdle or Staff itself, what Scott in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" calls "Orion's studded belt." It has a score of popular names, from the Danish *Frigge Rok* (Freya's Distaff) to the seamen's "Yard-arm," as, collectively, its three great stars have all manner of names in different countries, from the Magi, or the Three Kings or the Three Marys, to The Rake of the French Rhinelanders or the Three Mowers of the Silesian peasant.

Those who have studied the mythology and folk-lore of the Pleiades will remember how universally the numeral seven is associated with their varying nomenclature. But there was, and still is among primitive peoples, not infrequent confusion in the use of "The Seven Stars" as a specific name. Although from China to Arabia, from India and Persia to the Latin countries of the South, the term almost invariably designates the Pleiades, in the folk-lore of many Western nations it is used for the seven planets, and in many Northern races it is often used for the seven brilliant stars of the Great Bear. Even the Biblical allusion to "The Seven Stars," as our own Anglo-Saxon ancestral *Sifunsterri*, does not necessarily indicate the Pleiades: many consider the seven great planets to be meant. There is a Shetland rune, common to all the north isles and to be heard in Iceland and Norway, known as the rune of sevens, and of which one of the invocatory lines is "And by da seven shiners." All kinds of interpretation have explained this, from the obvious "seven planets," or else the Pleiades, to the Seven Candlesticks of "Revelation" and I know not what besides. I have again and again asked fisher-folk or others from the Orkneys and Shetlands, and in all but one or two instances the answer has clearly indicated the Great Bear, occasionally Polaris and the Ursine Arcturus and their nearest brilliant "shiners." Again, *Cran-narain*, one of the Gaelic names for the Pleiades, is, perhaps, as often applied to the Great Bear: the curious legend of the Baker's Shovel, implied in the Gaelic term, fitting equally.

Of the Great Bear, of the North Star, I find, however, there is not space now to speak further. This I hope to do in an ensuing paper. Of Polaris itself, indeed, there is more than enough to draw upon. Years ago I began an MS. book called "The Book of the North Star," and from my recollection of it (for at the moment of writing I am far from my books) I should say there is enough folk-lore and legend and various interest connected with this star wherefrom to evolve a volume solely devoted to it. It is strange that "the Lamp of the North" should have so fascinated all the poets from the time of Homer till to-day, and yet that all have dwelled in the same illusion as to its absolute steadfastness. Nevertheless, Homer's

"Arctos, sole star that never bathes in the ocean wave"

has both poetic truth and the truth of actuality.

It is a relief to put aside notes and pen and paper, and to go out and look up into the darkness and silence, and up to those "slow-moving palaces of wandering light" of which one has been writing. How overwhelmingly futile seems not only the poor written word, but even the mysterious pursuit of the far-reaching thought of man. By the sweat of the brow, by the dauntless pride of the mind, we mortal creatures have learned

some of the mysteries of the coming and going in infinitude of these incalculable worlds, of their vast procession from the unknown to the unknown. Then, on a night such as this, one stands solitary in the night, and feels less than the shadow of a leaf that has passed upon the wind, before these still, cold, inevitable, infinitely remote yet overwhelmingly near Children of Immortality.

THE ART OF HORSEMANSHIP.—I.

For what the horse does under compulsion, as Simon also observes, is done without understanding, and there is no beauty in it.—XENOPHON.

It is now nearly ten years since an article in the *Quarterly Review* revived attention in the literature and history of the "Manège" Art, or the *Haute École*, as the higher education of the horse is called in the country which, without initiating it or maintaining an unbroken supremacy, has brought it to its most complete modern expression. For though our "Sweet Enemy, France"—as Sidney apostrophised her, in a sonnet "managed" to an exquisite "air"—learnt the art in Italy under Grisone, Fiaschi, Corte, Caracciolo, and Pignatelli (the master of Salomon de La Broue, the author of the first French work, "*La Cavalerie Française*," in 1593), and at a later date her *Ecuyers* sat at the heel of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, yet the countrymen of Pluvinel, De Solleysel, and François Robichon de la Guérinière (to name only three of her master riders and writers) may well be considered to have contributed towards the perfection of the art more than they borrowed. The difficult and delicate task of training a horse to respond to every manifestation of the will of

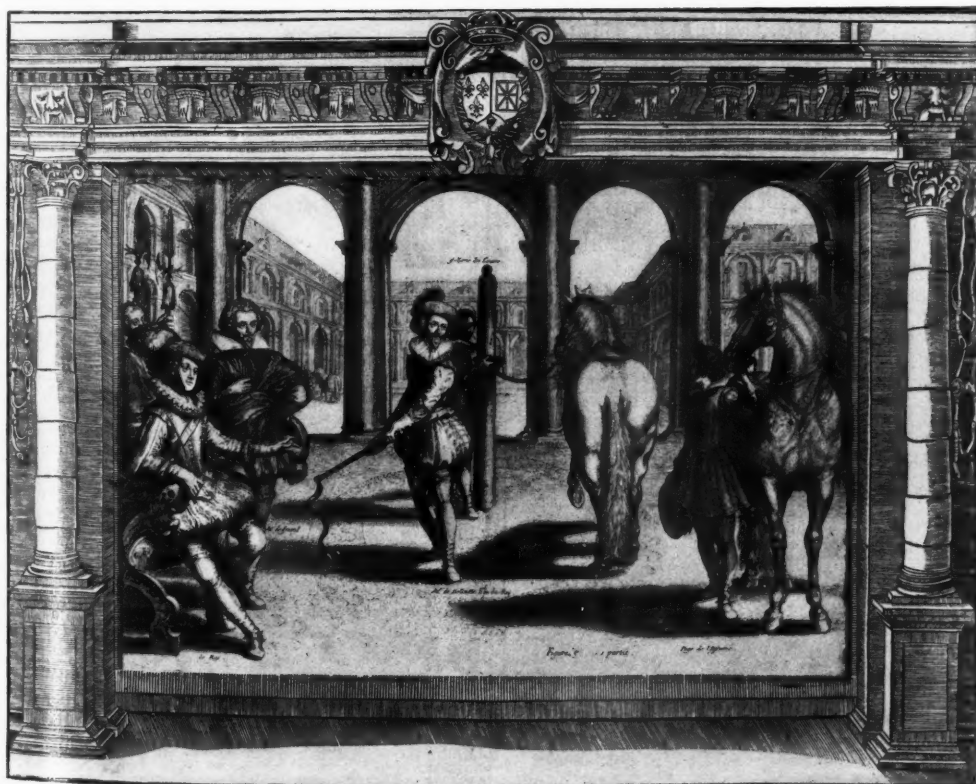


PROPER PLACING OF THE HEAD.

his rider has always, except to a few *esprits d'élite* at various periods, appeared to the majority of our sporting and hunting countrymen an inferior aim, akin to the objects of the circus, and

only deserving to live amid its spangles or be buried in the sawdust, to which in latter days it degenerated. But if we look to the idea, or aesthetic impulse, underlying the culture of the Manège, we find it to be, first, the perfectibility through training of the horse's capacities; and, secondly, the identifying of its powers with those of the brain of the rider, and the subordination of its physical strength to the control of his will and intellect.

This humanisation of the horse is the ideal which we find so beautifully realised in the Phidian sculptures from the frieze of the Parthenon—the whole bodies of the youths brought into exquisite and harmonious service by the Greek "gymnastic fused in music," as Pater has suggested to us in his interpretation of Plato's theory of education; the identity of man and horse being found even more completely embodied in the earlier myth of the Centaur. However this may be, it is an interesting commentary that the periods of the highest development of the horse have been coincident with some of the finest results of civilisation: in Ancient Greece under



NECESSARY PUNISHMENT.

Pericles, Phidias, and Xenophon; in Italy in the latter part of the Renaissance; and in France and England in the seventeenth century, when Louis XIV. was *arbiter elegantiarum et mundi*.

An eloquent passage, which I translate from M. Cherbuliez's

souls and thoughts. In both man and horse the same case, the same surrender—no effort—a vigour self-assured, and revelling in free play. Incontestably the rider commands, but it is hardly noticeable—he acts upon the horse by imperceptible aids, united to it, like the human bust to the quadruped in the Centaur; the education which the horseman has received is transmitted to the horse. Both have the same family likeness, the same grace, the same strength, the same gentleness, the same pride—exhaling the dignity of a free heart mastered only by reason. Riders and horsemen have all been educated beneath the soft Attic sky, amid the olives of the Academy and the laurels of Cephissus, within sight of sacred Hymettus, in the lifetime of Pericles, Aspasia, and Socrates. Riders and horses all received in heritage that beauty of the soul which Athenian education cultivated. Riders and horses have all learned that music which produces, in the language of Plato, the harmony of souls and the immutable order of the Universe."

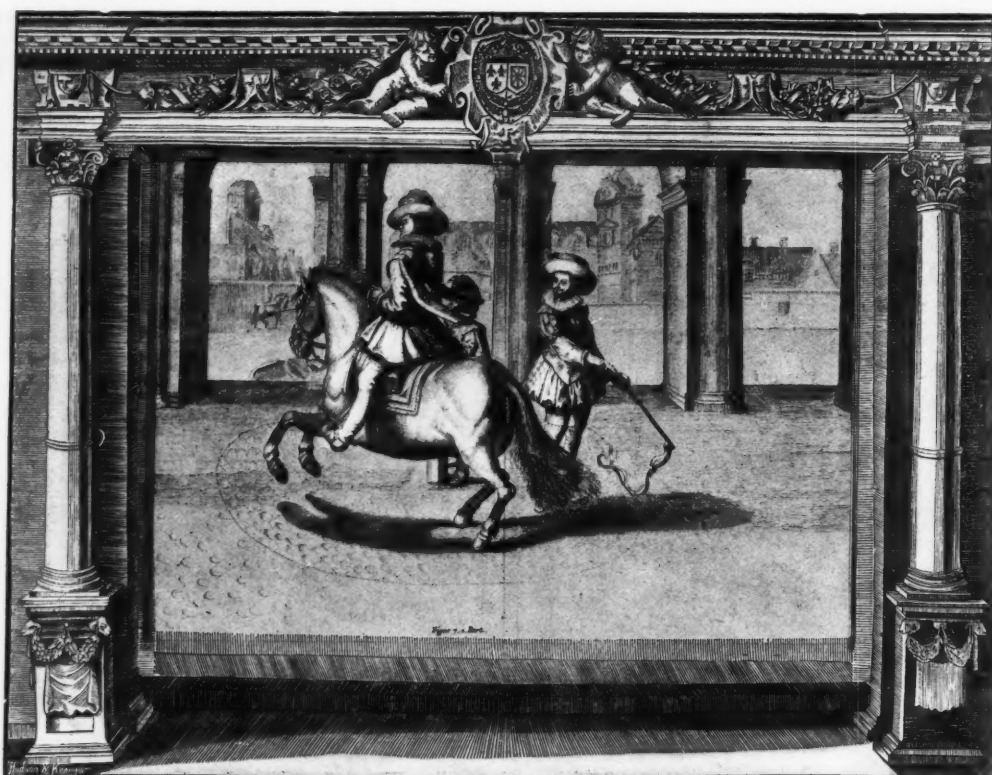
Having said thus much by way of prelude, we must cease generalising, and leaving for another occasion all mention of the early Italian school of horsemanship, come to the special French master who is the subject of our article, Antoine de Pluvinet, Ecuyer Principal de sa Majesté, and his folio, "L'Instruction du Roy en l'Exercice de monter à Cheval," with its fine copper-plates by Crispin de Passe reproduced in our illustrations.

The history of the book itself is curious, and we owe our account to M. Charles Duplessis's equitation in France. Pluvinet confided his MS. to his friend René de Menou de Charnizay, who had published "La Pratique du Cavalier" in 1612, to revise and prepare the book for the press, and entrusted the execution of the plates to Crispin de Pas (or Passe), one of the greatest line-engravers of that or any day. Pluvinet died before the engraving of the plates was finished, and de Passe, not to lose the fruit of his labours, hastily finished the rest, and having obtained from Pluvinet's servant an incomplete copy of the MS., published the whole at his own expense in 1623. Although incomplete, this edition is most valued on account of the early states of the plates, and was reprinted at Paris in 1624. This explains the difference in the title of de Passe's two editions, as "Le Maneige Royal, où l'on peut remarquer le défaut et la perfection du Cavalier," with sixty-seven plates from Menou's edition, which appeared in 1625, at Amsterdam (other editions in 1627, 1628, 1639, and 1666), with sixty-four engravings, under the title first given above.

Antoine de Pluvinet, according to M. Duplessis, was born of a noble family in 1555 at Crest, in Dauphiné, and went early to Italy to study the art of equitation under the celebrated Pignatelli at Ferrara, and there De Sourdis, first Ecuyer of Charles IX., who had been sent to Italy to buy horses, met Pluvinet, aged seventeen years. He brought him back to France in the year 1572, and the Duc d'Anjou,

who had just been named King of Poland, appointed him his first Ecuyer.

De Pluvinet returned to Paris with the Prince on his flight from Varsovie, after the death of Charles, and when the Comte



HAUTE ECOLE—A BEGINNER.

"A propos d'un Cheval" (in later editions entitled "Un Cheval de Phidias"), well illustrates this harmony of action shown in the Parthenon sculpture at the British Museum:

"Look at this horseman weaving his Arcadian *pilos*, draped in his closely-folded mantle, the fringe overhanging his leg. See how their poses, their attitudes go together; how the head of the rider leaning forward and



RENDERING THE HORSE COURAGEOUS.

gently bowed over his breast responds to the undulating movement of the horse's crest; and how all these lines compose that delicious melody of forms, which modern sculpture has not been able to reproduce. And then observe that this unison of lines and movements is only the emblem of the concert of

de Saint-Anthoine died, in the reign of Henri IV., he replaced him as first Ecuyer to the King, and put in practice his project, formed several years before, of creating in Paris an Academy of Equitation upon an Italian model. In this he was aided financially by the Comte Hurault de Chiverny, Chancellor of France, and was able to open his academy in the Faubourg St. Honoré in 1598, near the King's great stable, of which Pluvinel was also the director. As a further reward he was appointed Chamberlain, second Tutor of the Dauphin (afterwards Louis XIII.), and later on as Ambassador to Maurice the Stadtholder of Holland, as much, perhaps, for his knowledge of stables as of the stability of States. Honours were heaped on him. He was appointed Tutor of César Duc de Vendôme, and Commandant of the Tower of Boulogne and his native town of Crest, and the King granted him a coat-of-arms quartering those of Poland and bearing a mounted cavalier. He continued his lessons to the young Dauphin for several years of his minority, and the latter, being a fine horseman, created a perfect mania for equitation. Pluvinel died on August 24th, 1620, leaving four daughters, who all made brilliant marriages.

Our plates are taken from the Amsterdam edition of 1668, with a medallion portrait of Pluvinel, who also figures in many of the other plates, and whose features bear a very close resemblance to those of the President of another Royal Academy, the late Lord Leighton. Beneath the portrait is the equivocating motto, "Ex Equo Æquum." In his dedication to the King, the editor, Renée de Menou Charnizay, speaks of the earlier unauthorised edition alluded to, and eulogises Pluvinel's "method of reducing horses to the perfect obedience of man," and Pluvinel himself as "the most excellent of all who have ever worn spurs in bringing the art to its perfection; the gentlest in making men understand the way of attaining the true point of the science; the quickest at every sort of invention to draw from horses what he desires without undue labour; the most polite in everything depending upon the perfection of the cavalier; and the master who has trained more men and horses than anyone in the last century." The instruction is conveyed to King Louis XIII., then, as we see from his picture recurring in every plate, a lad of sixteen, in the favourite form of dialogue, the King questioning, Pluvinel answering, and the courtiers standing around, foremost among them being César August, Duc de Bellegarde, Comte de Montbar, Marquis de Termes, Grand Ecuyer de France, who is portrayed in one of the early plates as the "mirror and virtuous model, on foot or horseback, to all the most proper and curious cavaliers."

The first thing Pluvinel points out is that, whereas most arts are studied in repose without agitation, the art of horsemanship has to be executed and exercised amid the turmoil and hazards of arms. Pluvinel's ideal horseman is to be of medium size (like the King, of course), who gives more pleasure to the horse than

the big, who want firmness and precision. His first maxim is that the horse itself must derive pleasure from its training, otherwise its rider and itself will produce nothing of good grace.

The first enquiry of the King is as to the dress of the



BALANCING THE HORSE.

horseman, to which Pluvinel replies that the cavalier must never be without a feather, that skirts and collars set better on horseback than doublets, and ruffs or frills better than bands. Breeches he prefers unpadded, showing the thigh of the rider; stockings with loops (*bas d'attache*), and boots not too wide, of soft leather, such as thin calf or strong morocco, fitting easily at

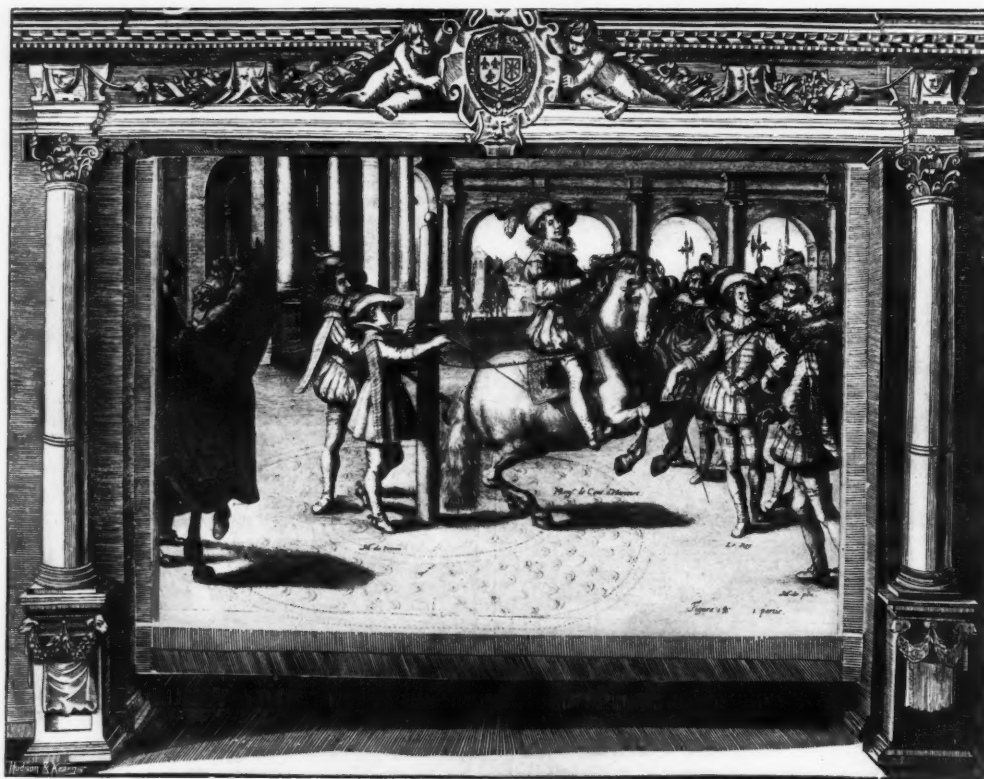


FINAL LESSONS IN THE "VOLTE."

the knee (the sewing in the bend of the knee being 3in. higher behind than in front, to make the line of the leg longer), and falling into folds near the stocking; the foot to be square cut, the better to fill the stirrup; the spurs those called *à la Dampville* invented

by the late Constable (a name, by the way, derived from the Roman *Comes Stabali*, revived by Charlemagne). Pluvinel does not approve of large rowels, but those with six round and sharpened points, in shape of a ninepin (*quille*). All these details are observed in the dress of M. de Bellegarde. Pluvinel then draws the famous distinction between *bel homme de cheval* and *bon homme de cheval* (the latter comprising the former, but not *vice versa*), which the following passage from Evelyn's "Diary" throws light upon: "I went with Lord Cornwallis to see the young gallants do their exercise, M. Faubert (he and his son provost masters of the Academie, and esteem'd of the best in Europe) having newly rail'd in a manège and fitted it for the academy. There were the Dukes of Norfolk and Northumberland, Lord Newburgh, and a nephew of Earle of Feversham. The exercises were (1) running at the ring, (2) flinging a javelin at a Moor's head, (3) discharging a pistol at a mark; lastly taking up a gauntlet with the point of a sword; all these perform'd in full speede. . . . Here I saw the difference of what the French call *bel homme à cheval*, and *bon homme à cheval*; the Duke of Norfolk being the first, that is, rather a fine person on a horse, the Duke of Northumberland being both in perfection, namely, a graceful person and excellent rider."

The bridle-hand is to be held three fingers above the pommel of the saddle, in the centre of which the cavalier is well down, being careful to avoid the hard saddle-bow, for fear of being seated, since the rider must be as upright in his



CADENCED VOLTE, WITH HEEL PRESSURE.

saddle as if on his feet, and his stomach advanced with a little hollow in his back near the waist. His two elbows a slight distance from the body, his right fist (four or five inches from the left) holding the handle of his switch, its point pointing upwards, a little over the horse's left ear, his legs forward, the toe resting firmly on the stirrup near the horse's shoulder, the heel low down and turned outwards, showing the soles of his boots, the right shoulder pushed forward, the knees grasping the saddle with all their strength.

Upon the question of horseflesh Pluvinel declares that the breeds from Italy are for the most part spoilt and bastardised. From Spain come few, and not of the best. Turkey does not furnish enough to be reckoned with, although these are very excellent. The Barb is commoner and very valuable, and the patriotic riding-master declares that Gascony, Auvergne, Limousin, Poitou, Normandy, Brittany, and Burgundy produce as good as, or better than, those of Germany, Flanders, and England; and for the "career" (*carrière*) he selects the bay barb Bonnite, given by M. le Grand, Grand Ecuyer of France, to His Majesty as the paragon of all the manège horses of the world. This horse had at first been declared by M. de la Broue to be very intractable, owing to its restiveness and tender mouth, but Pluvinel, by accustoming it to bits of different degrees, made of silk, kid, morocco, calf, and finally iron, got it to accept the one now used, in which it performed an air of curvets and voltes in a circle of its own length's diameter, which was called

the Saraband of the Bonnite. According to the standard of Pluvinel a horse was not *dressed* until it was perfectly obedient to the hand and two heels, and he directs his first lessons to trying to get the horse to use its brain rather than its haunches, loins, and legs.

Pluvinel's first aim is to teach the ignorant horse to make good voltes or turns, *terre à terre*, and this he accomplishes by putting a string in his mouth to accustom him to the bit and what he calls a *cavesson*, very much like a halter, the two equal ends of which are held by one hand, while the other holds a stick with a long strip of leather attached (called a *chambrière*). The trainer walks by his side and obliges him to turn at the length of the cord with his head turned inwards and his flank outside the circle. When explaining why a horse usually turns naturally to the left instead of to the right (caused by his being mounted from the left and led by grooms with their right hand), he develops his system on the lines of gentleness rather than severity, and explains its deviations from and abridgment of that of the Neapolitan, Jean Baptiste Pignatelli, under whom Pluvinel had studied for ten years. Having initiated the horse into the step, the trot, the gallop, at the single pillar, he attempts to cultivate his memory, attaching him to two pillars, and teaching him to avoid the touches of the wand or *chambrière*. After the horse has learnt these lessons in four or five days with saddle and bridle and hanging stirrup, he puts up a light and firm scholar without spurs; later on, one with more practice of hand and heel, but still under the discipline of the *cavesson* and *chambrière*. Thus step by step the horse grows accustomed to his rider's every movement, the equilibrium of his body, the pressure of his thigh, the caress of his voice, when he has achieved the proper cadence, now and then varied by a stroke of the *chambrière* or of the wand (*sous la bête*), the heels and spur being kept in reserve to the last. Gradually the man with the *chambrière* discontinues its use and withdraws from the pillar; and the rider remains alone in possession.

If there is any difficulty in accomplishing a good cadence (*terre à terre*), the rider descends, taps the horse lightly on the chest, and encourages him with the tongue to make the curvet, *i.e.*, to raise and bend his fore legs together in the air; and if this fails makes him leap over a bar about 1½ ft. high; he is then to be rewarded by a caress. "Amiser of blows, a prodigal of caresses," is one of Pluvinel's favourite maxims. The Duke of Newcastle has well defined *terre à terre* as a gallop in *deux temps*, which is made in two movements (*pistes*). The horse raises its two fore legs at once, and places them on the ground in the

same way. The hind legs follow and accompany the fore legs, which forms a stride and low cadence, like a succession of little very low leaps near the ground, going always forward and to the side. Although a low air, it serves as a foundation to all the raised airs. If the horse makes another cadence (such as *capriole*, *ballottade*, or *groupade*, to be hereafter explained), it is better to keep to the one of his choice, the main point being to encourage him in what he does best.

The aid of the heels and spurs is minutely analysed, delicate or firm pressure, and not a blow, being essential, the blow being kept for punishment—*pincer* is Pluvinel's own word. Sometimes two tennis balls are tied to the rowels of the spurs at first, to accustom the horse to the touch. The horse is best taught by the heel to move to one side or the other.

In Part II., the King expresses his desire to himself carry out the instruction of his riding-master, and the Bonnite, the most perfect horse in Europe, is brought forward, and the King instructed how to mount, how to sit well back in the saddle, when gripping his horse, thus obliging him to throw his haunches forward, M. le Grand telling the King, "without flattery," that he has seen scholars, often youths, who were not so straight and vigorous as His Majesty.

After learning to gallop and stop short, he is made to take two paces, and on the second, as he raises the right fore leg, at the same time he turns his pace gently to the right, to make the *demi-volte* (half-turn) while marching, crossing the left fore leg over



LEARNING THE "CURVET."

theright, and also the hind legs, doing the like at the other end of the *passade* to make a *demi-volte* to the left. These *passades* should be made of thirty paces in length, or five or six horse-lengths. The discourse of the *raised passades* is the true touchstone of horse and rider. The least movement of the man should be an absolute command to the horse.

Pluvinel sums up his course of instruction with the following general reflections: "The difficulty of acquiring these qualities, and the considerable time required for perfecting one's self in this exercise, cause some people who affect an air of capacity to say that the *manège* is worthless, that it uses up and ruins horses, and only serves to teach them to leap and dance, consequently making them useless for ordinary purposes. This false prejudice makes an infinite number of people neglect so noble and useful an exercise, whose entire object is to make the horse supple, gentle, and obedient, and to place it on its haunches, without which a horse, whether for war, hunting, or school, cannot be agreeable in its movements, nor of advantage to the rider."

A. FORBES SIEVEKING.

IN THE GARDEN.

THE SWEET PEA AND THE BEST VARIETIES.

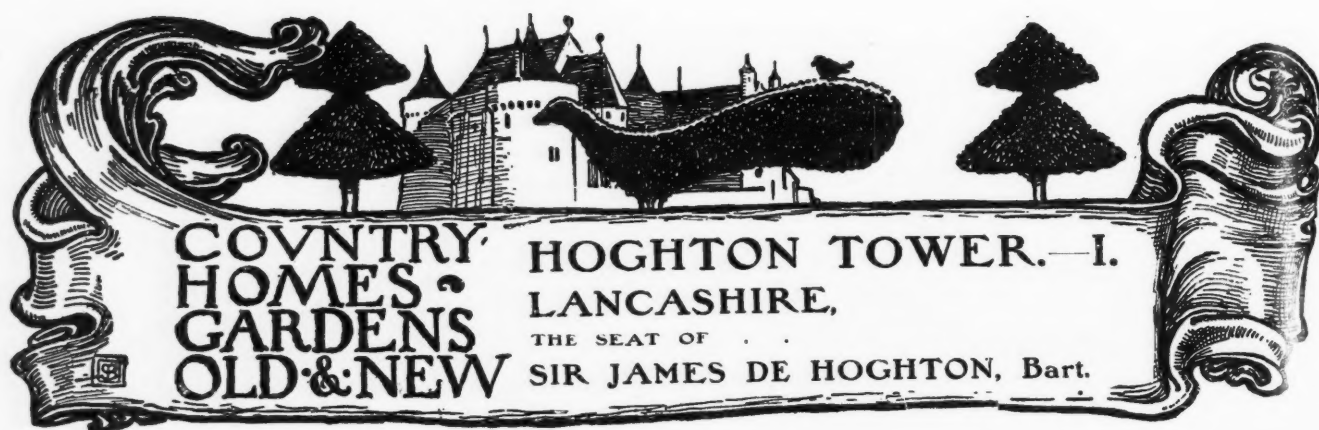
FEBRUARY has dawned, and brings with it thoughts of spring, and to the gardener increasing work. This is the month for seed sowing, and making selections to sow in March and April, the Sweet Pea in these selections receiving a large share of attention. Of all annual flowers this is the most varied in its colouring, and most dainty in form, with in most sorts a sweet fragrance. It is to be hoped that raisers of new varieties will think of the importance of fragrance in the Sweet Pea, and bring this out in its fulness. A Sweet Pea without scent is as poor as a fruit without flavour. Freshness and beauty of colouring do not atone for the absence of perfume. An immense improvement has taken place during the past quarter of a century, and this improvement is still going on, all thanks to the veteran grower, Mr. Eckford, who has raised the majority of the beautiful varieties that grace our gardens to-day. The usual way of sowing the seed is direct in well-prepared trenches in March. This has the advantage of simplicity, and in many gardens is the only plan that can be adopted. When this practice is followed, prepare the trenches at once by taking out the soil to a depth of 2ft., or even more, and in the bottom work in some well-decayed manure, so that the roots can reach it in time, and give an impetus to the growth. It is wise to leave sufficient space for

the water. When the surface soil is the same level all round, the water given flows away rapidly, and does not thoroughly soak the roots. Sweet Peas must have a rich soil, and, in hot summers, an abundance of water. Without this assistance success is impossible. This preparation and after treatment are the more needful when the garden is in the neighbourhood of a large town, as Sweet Peas are like Roses in this respect—a wholesome dislike to a smoky atmosphere. The enthusiast in Sweet Pea culture has another system, and that is, at this time, to sow the seeds in boxes about 9in. in depth. The best soil to fill the boxes with should consist of fibrous loam, three parts, and a part each of well-decayed leaf-mould and coarse sand, with a little finely-powdered charcoal. Place the seeds 3in. from each other, and cover with an inch of soil. Where it is not possible to use boxes, 6in. pots will serve the same purpose. Maintain the soil in a fairly moist condition, and when the seedlings have grown 3in. high, put small twigs to them to prevent the plants falling about. Once this occurs it is difficult to get the growth right again. No forcing must be attempted, but simply place the boxes or pots in a cold frame, and give plenty of air. Artificial heat is a mistake, as it simply encourages a weakly growth, which soon collapses when exposed to the winds and frosts of spring. They can be planted out in April in well-prepared trenches, such as we have indicated. It always pays to grow Sweet Peas well. These notes will be continued in our next issue.

RANDOM NOTES.

Ordering Seeds—A correspondent sends a timely note on this important February gardening work: "Some of the seed catalogues are beautiful productions, but good wine needs no bush. Genuine seeds do not require much praise. My advice is: Do not buy low-priced seeds. A seedsman who sells only the best seeds cannot sell so cheaply as the man who takes no trouble to secure those seeds. If any seeds are left from the previous year, their growing powers can be easily tested by sowing a few in a pot and taking the average. Most seeds will grow well the second year, and many will retain their vitality much longer."

The Best Winter Pear.—Ninety-nine out of a hundred fruit fanciers when asked, "Which is the best winter Pear?" would reply, "Winter Nelis." The reason for this choice is the rich and luscious flavour of the fruit. It has no good looks, but bears freely on the Quince stock, especially against a wall, and should hang as long as possible on the tree. It is a well-known Pear, introduced over a century ago; but in this age of novelties the well-tried favourites are in danger of neglect. The writer is planting more trees of it, one against the west wall of the house. Jargonelle has proved a failure. It has a great reputation, but the fruit rots so quickly in the centre, and has so short a season, that it is useless unless one can eat it at the right moment. This is not always possible. We think of the single Roses in the country garden. A letter comes to say they are in their fullest beauty, but the storm of one night destroys the anticipations of a year.



THE family of the Hoghtons is one of those few families in England which dwell upon the lands from which they drew their name when surnames began. Although for the greater part of the last two centuries Hoghton Tower was abandoned as a dwelling-house, its possession never passed from the hands of the ancient stock now once more at home in their ancestral seat.

Hoghton lies between swart Blackburn and dingy Preston, an ill corner for a beautiful old house to be caught in. The new industry clanks and puffs round about it, and though the old sights of the seacoast to the west and the back of Pendle Hill to the north-east remain to the watchers from the tower, the tall chimneys are nearer at hand.

The tower is high upon a hillside above Darwen banks, Thomas Hoghton, its builder, having abandoned a still older house which was below the hill nigh to the water of Darwen. The great manor of which it is the chief house is in the townships of Hoghton, Wheelton, and Withnell, all in the parish of Leyland. In the thirteenth century Warin Bussel gave Hoghton, with his daughter, to Hamon the Butler, from whose second son, Richard, antiquarian legend traces the descent of the Hoghtons of Hoghton.

In those far-off days Hoghton, a name which can mean nothing less than a house on a hill, must have risen above dense forest land, and sport lay at the gate for which latter-day sportsmen are content to seek in other continents. Many generations afterwards a writer could dwell upon the remembered glories of "the great park of Hoghton," emparked under an

ancient licence, to which John of Gaunt added a licence to enlarge its bounds with seven score acres more. This most spacious park, as we are told, was so full of tall timber that a man in its dark glades might scarce find the sun at noonday. And under the boughs walked boars and bulls "of a white and spangled coulor," with red deer in great plenty. Besides these noble beasts of the chase, the Hoghtons might sport with land birds and birds of the water-side, conies and hares, and with things that run and burrow and fly, to the heart's content of the sportsman.

In our picture of the gate-tower will be seen the swinging vane with the crest of Hoghton. That crest is the white bull, a memory of the herd which once ranged Hoghton Park, the dear prey of the Hoghtons, who, looking round them, could see no nobler beast for their helms.

In such a place was nursed a race of knights and squires of whom the kingdom hears little, but the history of the countryside must have been compact of their deeds in sport and brawl. The old town of Preston, lying so near their gates, was their field of public service, and many Hoghtons of the early days were content to serve as its Mayor, and also furnished seven High Sheriffs for the county. When Thomas Hoghton added so largely to the house in 1565 he meddled little with the new Italian tastes of his time. He built, as his fathers would have built, a stone house with battlements, English in every window mullion and moulding—a house which stout fellows might hold against the country-side with bow and hand-gun. What manner of men were the Hoghtons who dwelt in this Tower, and





THE HALL, INNER QUADRANGLE, AND STATUE OF WILLIAM OF ORANGE IN LEAD.

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what neighbours were theirs, may be seen from the fate of one of the first lords of Hoghton, who made a home here. Record, with no need of legend to supplement it, tells how Thomas Hoghton of Hoghton impounded the cattle of a widow Singleton. Singleton's widow had strong friends to aid her, and Thomas Hoghton, riding at the head of a little army of thirty armed men, came in the path of Thomas Langton, the baron of Newton, with eighty gentlemen and husbandmen behind him. Then there were

stabbing and shooting amongst neighbours, the Hoghton faction was broken, and Thomas Hoghton and one of his men were taken up dead. Such an affray might have passed under Edward IV. without the law being troubled for it, but in 1592 the days of private war were over, and many Lancashire men of all ranks were clapped behind the grate of a gaol. But though the law had come to its own at last, policy must needs temper its action in these wild parts of the land. The great Earl of Derby, a little king in Lancashire, wrote with his own hand to the Lord Burghley in London, and his letter remains to us. It is



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THE NORTH ENTRANCE TO THE COURTYARD. "COUNTRY LIFE."

bad enough that Master Hoghton of Hoghton should be dead in a chance medley; but if Lancashire gentlemen and yeomen suffer for the deed, such a ceaseless quarrel, a blood feud, will be awakened in the country-side that the generation will not see the end of it. Not that it is believed that the law will be so harsh as to hang guilty gentlemen, but some such are in peril of suffering the ancient penalty of burning in the hand, and they are "so great in kindred and affinity, and so stored with friends" that trouble might be

looked for as soon as the scorched hands could hold a weapon. Then there were the "poorer sort," neighbours all, and so recklessly illiterate that when asked to "prove their clergy," and save their necks by reading in the psalm-book, they will fail at the test, and so must die by the rope. So the petition of the Earl of Derby and forty-seven other peacemakers prevails, the baron of Newton is bundled out of the neighbourhood until resentment may have died down, and the Hoghtons accept, as the price of their housefather's blood, the manor of Walton-le-Dale, halfway between Hoghton and Preston.



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A GARDEN FAIR.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



THE HALL WITH ITS WINDOWS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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FROM THE QUADRANGLE OR INNER COURT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE OUTER GATEWAY.

FROM THE QUADRANGLE OR INNER COURT.

In the time of the slain man's son Hoghton Tower saw its brilliant noonday. Its noble seat upon the hill set off the splendours of its broken lines of windows, its buildings running round two courtyards, its stately gatehouse with its flanking towers, the vanes and the battlements of the Tudor work. In such a house Sir Richard Hoghton of Hoghton received King James I. and VI. on a hot August day in 1617.

King James, who loathed the sheen of steel and hated the naked blade, was nevertheless as keen a huntsman as the Conqueror or any of his children; and many a park in England was maintained, as the Countess of Westmorland declared her deer park of Apethorpe to be kept, more for the King's sport than for the owner's. Though Hoghton was far away in remote Lancashire, King James had heard the tale of its red deer, and came that way on his road to Scotland. Nicholas Assheton of Downham, a Lancashire squire and a kinsman of the Hoghtons, has preserved for us in his diary of huntings and tipplings the story of the Royal visit. The lord of Hoghton had prepared a great feast for majesty, and had arrayed all the neighbouring gentry, after the old fashion, in cloth of his livery colours. Amongst others, he approached Nicholas Assheton of Downham "to do him such favour, countenance, and grace as to wear his cloth" and attend him at Hoghton for the King's coming. Such spectacles were even then only possible in a great house which loved the customs of bygone days, and the diarist is careful to



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THE GARDEN STAIRWAY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

explain to himself that Sir Richard Hoghton asked this favour "rather for his grace and reputation, showing his neighbours' love, than any exacting of mean service." But the squire of Downham and many others put on the Hoghton livery cloth and hasten to meet the King and his travelling Court.

On a Friday the King entered Hoghton Park and hunted the stag. On the Saturday he was again under the trees, and Hoghton shows good sport in a hot sun. After the Saturday

dinner the King went down to the alum mine long maintained at the hillfoot and "viewed them precisely." In the afternoon he hankered for more sport, and a roebuck was put up, at whom the King's majesty shot with a hand-gun—and missed. A second piece was given him, and he fired again, breaking the buck's thigh. The horn sounded for the dogs, who were, however, so long in coming that the Lord Compton, with uncourtier-like skill, mended majesty's shot with another ball, which slew the buck outright.

On Sunday, August 17th, Nicholas Assheton and his fellows "served the lords with biskett, wyne, and jellie," and the Bishop of Chester preached a sermon. Dinner followed, a dinner whose bill is still preserved, a dinner whose two courses of all manner of flesh and fowl recall the franklin's house in which it snowed meat and drink. For with mutton, beef and veal, pig and venison, were chickens, ducks, capons, geese, plover, partridge, quail, pheasant, turkey and turkey chicks, herne and many



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THE TOWER ENTRANCE.

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HOGHTON FROM THE EAST.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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THE WAY OUT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

more, boiled rabbits, fried rabbits, cold rabbits, pies of all birds, hot mince pie, custard and buttered pease, all coming pell-mell to table with an utter disregard of the dainty appetite which must be coaxed, with overtures of soup and fish, to a journey down a carefully-poised bill of fare. This mighty dinner was eaten soon after midday, and at four o'clock there was "a rush bearing and piping" before the King and his company in the middle court; after which, as though the dinner had never been, all went cheerfully to a supper which, though it was the dinner's fellow, yet left everyone ready for a mask of noblemen, knights, gentlemen, and courtiers, "in the middle round in the garden," and for "dancing the huckler" and the like activities, which carried them on to the close of a busy day.

THE THER OF THE HIMALAYAS.

THE ther is not so well known to sporting readers as are the ibex and markhor, which have always been regarded, and rightly so, as the special prizes of hunters in the high Himalayas. His horns, being short—12in. to 14in. only—cannot of course compare as trophies with those of the other two unrivalled goats; and the fact of his being found at altitudes somewhat lower than these, may seem to detract from the interest and adventure of his pursuit. Then he is not found in the parts of Kashmir most commonly affected by sportsmen, and most men prefer to go for the nobler game when they have their chance of a shooting trip. Yet the ther, also a goat, is a grand fellow, too. Indeed, apart from the horns, he is, I think, in general appearance a finer animal than either the markhor or ibex. He stands as high, is quite as massively built, and has an incomparably finer coat. With his long grey hair and shaggy beard extending far down his chest, no more stirring sight need the sportsman wish for than a rugged old male as he stands on some jutting rock, still as the rock itself, and gazing intently down, alert and apprehensive. And let none imagine that, because his haunts are of lower actual elevation, the ground where he dwells is any whit easier to get over, or that there is less interest or difficulty in stalking him. For like those others, it is the steep and rugged cliffs which he loves, and scorns as he loves, and many sportsmen are ready to maintain that the "going" when after ther is worse and more dangerous than that met with in the case of any other of the Himalayan animals. Personally, I have not noticed this. I have found all sufficiently interesting in this respect. But possibly my experience was peculiar. For on the only occasion on which I went

NOTES,

Of the DIET, at HOGHTON,

At the KING's coming there, 1617.

SUNDAY, DINNER, 1617.

of August, 1617.

For the LORDS' TABLE.

FIRST COURSE.

Pollack
Boiled Capons
Mutton, boiled
Boiled Chickens
Shoulder of Mutton, roast
Ducks, boiled
Loaf of Veal, roast
Pollack
Hamach of Venison, roast
Boiled Capons
Polly of Venison, hot
Roast Turkey
Veal, baked
Swan, roast, 1 and 1 for the King
Goose, roasted
Rabbit, cold
Jiggin of Mutton, boiled
Supper Phe
Break of Veal, boiled
Capons, roast
Pollack
Beef, roast
Tongue Phe, cold
Spiced, boiled
Herrings, cold
Carlow Phe, cold
Mince Phe, hot
Collards
Pigs, roast.

SECOND COURSE.

Hot Pheasant, 1 and 1 for the King
Quails, 6 for the King
Partridge
Pheasant
Chickens
Artichoke Phe
Chickens
Curtains, roast

Pan, buttered
Rabbit
Duck
Pheasant
Flowers
Red Deer Phe
Pig, boiled
Hot Mutton, roast, 3 of a Dish
Lamb, roast
Groceries of Bacon
Pigeons, roast
Made Dills
Chickens, baked
Phe Tare
Pollack and Grate
Dried Tongues
Turkey Phe
Pheasant Phe
— Tart
Hog Cheeks, dried
Turkey Cheeks, cold

SUNDAY Night SUPPER, 1617.

17th August, 1617.

FIRST COURSE.

Pollack
Boiled Capons
Cold Mutton
Shoulder of Mutton, roast
Chickens, boiled
Cold Capons
Roast Veal
Rabbit, boiled
Pollack
Turkey, roast
Polly of Venison, hot
Shoulder of Mutton, roast
Herrings, cold
Sliced Beef, Unble Phe
Ducks, boiled, Chickens, baked
Pollack
Cold Mutton Tongue Phe
New Tongue, roast

Spiced, boiled
Curtains baked, cold
Turkey baked, cold
Non Fett
Boiled Rabbits
— fried

SECOND COURSE.

Quails
Pheasant
Herrings
Pheasant
Chickens
Phe Tare
Rabbit
Pheasant, roasted
Made Dills
Ducks
Groceries of Bacon
Red Deer Phe
Pigeons
Wild Boar Phe
Carlow
Dry Mutton Tongue
— Tart
Dried Hog Chick
Red Deer Phe

MONDAY Morning's BREAKFAST,

18th Aug. 1617.

Pollack
Boiled Capons
Shoulder of Mutton
Veal, roast
Boiled Chickens
Rabbit, roast
Shoulder of Mutton, roast
Chine of Beef, roast
Polly of Venison
Turkey, roast
Pig, roast
Venison, roast

Ducks, boiled
Pollack
Red Deer Phe, cold
Four Capons, roast
Pheasant, roast
Pheasant
Herrings
Mutton, boiled
Wild Boar, Phe
Jiggin of Mutton, boiled
Barred —
Groceries of Bacon
Chickens Phe
Four Capons
Dried Hg. Chick
Unble Phe
Tart
Made Dills

For the PASTRIES.

John Crane
Richard Blyth
William Adley
Alexander Cooper

For the RANGES.

John Colman
Evan Jones
John Banks
Edwin Davis

For BOILING.

John Mayor
William Parker

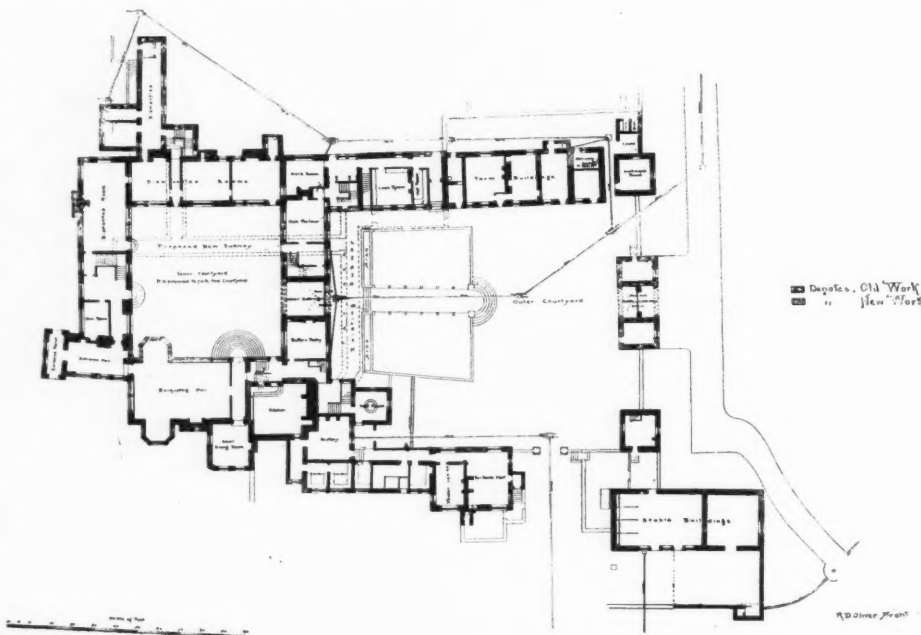
For FULLETS.

John Clark
John Baily

LABOURERS.

Mr. Morris, Chief Cook
Mr. Miller

ROYAL BANQUETING IN OLDEN DAYS.



PLAN OF THE ANCIENT HOME OF THE HOGHTONS.

after ther no doubt luck was decidedly on my side—as will be seen.

I had before this been on many glorious expeditions among the Kashmir mountains, and had bagged specimens of nearly all the other Himalayan game. And now I wanted ther to add to the collection. Time, alas! had by now had its effect, and although hill stalking still retained for me its interest above all other forms of sport, the instinct of unrestricted slaughter had waned considerably. I had no wish for an extra big bag, and told myself that two good heads would well content me. Quite possibly I might fail even in this. Such definite desires have a way of remaining unfulfilled, and many a man had come back with less, or none. I was fully aware, too, of those many slips to be reckoned with—the best ground already appropriated, failure to find the game, unlucky or bungled stalks, or all successful preliminaries turned to shameful disaster by failure of the bullet to find its billet in the end. All these things had happened before, and might again. So it was with no unduly extravagant expectations that I made my start.

The district I was bound for was easy of access. After crossing a high pass—some 13,000ft.—three long marches took me to ground where ther

might be expected. My very first enquiries there elicited from the local village shikari that he knew the whereabouts of a herd. He had seen them quite recently, and declared that they never wandered far. Though hardly believing, I promptly engaged him—plenty of bakshish if he showed sport, prompt dismissal and an eternal bad name if he played me false—and next morning we moved camp up towards the spot. It was a long climb, and we did not arrive till afternoon. I was tired enough, and was thankfully sitting down to a cup of tea an hour later, when in rushed the shikari, breathless and excited, to say he had seen the herd; and, indeed, I could see them with my glasses from the tent door—no less than six fine males, and in an ideal place for a stalk. Delay would have been criminal, so, pining as I was for that tea, we were off at once. Everything seemed favourable: the wind was right, and means of concealment ample. And there was no hitch. Half-an-hour took us to the spot where we should be within shot. Giving

myself a short time to breathe and get steady, I raised myself cautiously from behind a rock. The place was strewn with big boulders and thickly dotted with low bushes. I could see nothing at first, and was about to move forward. This would probably have been the fatal and irretrievable slip. But just in time I caught sight of a head. Hewas not a hundred yards off, and I soon made out the body. I fired, and he disappeared. Then two or three came in sight at once, alarmed, but evidently puzzled as to the direction

of the danger. So, lying very low, I got another fair shot, and this time there was no mistake. He dropped like a stone. Another shot, and then another, resulted in uncertainty: there was too much cover to see if they fell. So once more I fired, and again there could be no doubt, for we could see him, struggling but stationary, among the bushes. Now we jumped forward, and soon picked up not two, but four, all fairly shot in the right place, and all with really good heads. So back to camp to resume my interrupted tea. As sharp and smart a piece of work as ever I did, the whole performance having taken little over an hour. Small wonder I felt at peace with all men, and the pipe I smoked that night was one of unruffled content. But the conclusion of the episode was not yet. There was to be a still more dramatic ending.

I thought I deserved, and had promised myself, what we in our Eastern exile fondly term a Europe morning; that is, a reversal of the tyranny of turning out at sunrise, a snug turning over on the other side and a second delicious snooze, with a cup of tea in bed on awaking at one's own sweet will. We should have ample occupation in camp on the morrow, beheading and skinning and gloating over our prizes. But this was not to be. Daylight had hardly come when I heard "Sahib, sahib!" at the tent door. "What is it, you son of an owl? Did I not tell you I was not going to get up this morning? Get out of this, —" "But, sahib, it is not this slave's fault. The shikari says there is a bear quite close. We have all seen it. It is necessary that your honour should be quick." Of course, I tumbled out at once. I pulled on a pair of grass shoes, postponing all further dressing, and joined the shikari, rifle in hand. He was crouching behind a tree close to camp, and I soon had my glasses on the bear. It was a big female, with two cubs, and the whole family were grubbing and gambolling about on the very ground where the ther had been. We had not watched more than a few minutes when suddenly we saw something roll down the hillside towards us. "There goes one of the cubs," said I. "Tobah, so it is." And immediately down came the old bear herself at a gallop, apparently in great concern for her offspring. They were now lost to sight, and we quickly determined to make straight for the place, as the old lady would not remain long away from the other cub. But luck was not with us this time. The wind, as we soon found, had turned and began to blow upwards.

The bear got our scent, and was moving off before I got within 200 yds. I had to take the shot, and quickly. She replied loudly enough, and I thought I had scored again. But the wound was in no vital place, and, though I fired one more despairing shot, and we followed at our best pace, she soon disappeared in the hopeless distance. All this time we had seen nothing of the cub which had taken the involuntary roll downhill; so we now made our way back to the place. Almost at once the shikari called out, "Look, sahib; what is this?" kicking something on the ground with his foot, and with a broad grin on his face. I went up, and there was another ther, dead and partly eaten. So it was no cub that rolled down, but yet another victim to add to my score of yesterday. The old bear had found the dead ther and was initiating her cubs in the enjoyment of a flesh diet when the carcase had slipped and rolled down. So, now, once again, we were full of jubilation, and the air was charged with congratulation and fulsome praises. The shikari had been with many sahibs, but none such a *bahadur* as this one; and who ever saw such a rifle! As for the bear, evil one that she was not to succumb to the sahib's bullet, she had, at least, done us this good turn. But it was all fate, and the sahib would not forget the shikari, who is a poor man. And so back to camp, to get on some clothes and smoke more pipes of peace.

By all rules of mere story-telling the first and main episode should have been rounded off by the slaying of the bear, and, perhaps, the capture of the cubs. But consideration for strict truth forbids. It was, however, a compensation subsequently to account for a whole happy family of bears—mother, and two cubs but little smaller than herself—again three shots only being required for this annihilation. Two more ther and one ibex completed my bag after many days' wandering. I had, meantime, in good faith refused to fire at ther more than once, and these two were shot partly for the camp pot, and partly simply because they seemed to force themselves on me, and my resolution was not proof against the temptation.

The deadliness which I claim for the shooting on this trip will be readily granted. I had eleven kills for the same number of shots, and only two misses. And this was with a military Martini-Henry carbine, bullets of express pattern being substituted for the solid ones. Perhaps in this, too, there was an element of luck, or it was all fate, as the shikari would have said.

P. R. BAIRNSFATHER.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

COMPARATIVELY speaking, the wits are so few in the domain of English literature, and Sydney Smith stands out so conspicuously as holding a place peculiarly his own among them, that Mr. George W. E. Russell had a splendid opportunity in the latest addition to the English Men of Letters Series, *Sydney Smith* (Macmillan). It is true that the ground had been well trodden before. Smith's daughter Saba, Lady Holland, published a biographical memoir in 1855, just after his death. Lord Houghton published his monograph in 1873, and in 1884 Stuart Reid produced his more ambitious sketch of "The Life and Times of Mr. Sydney Smith"; while Mr. Leslie Stephen contributed an excellent article on the subject to "The Dictionary of National Biography." But a great deal of work remained to be done, and Mr. Russell in part has succeeded in doing it well. The new "life" is interesting from beginning to end, and it gives a fairly vivid and accurate picture of the subject of it. The ell of pedigree with which Scott thought every biography should be prefaced, is got over characteristically by quoting from the great wit: "You may try to disguise it in any way you like, Smyth or Smythe or Smijth, but you always go back to Smith after all—the most numerous and the most respectable family in England." When asked to put his arms in the county history, Smith's characteristic rejoinder was that his family "never had any arms; they invariably sealed their letters with their thumbs." Sydney Smith was born on June 3rd, 1771, and we may very well pass over his school years and his terms at Oxford until we come to the time when he was ordained deacon in 1794. Soon after he became curate of Netheravon, a village near Amesbury. The place was then, as now, a heritage of the family of Hicks-Beach, but life there must have been duller even than in other country places, because the Hicks-Beach of the time lived for the greater part of the year at another place of his, Williamstrop, near Fairford. One can fancy the young Sydney Smith, full of wit and cleverness and energy, playing the part here of *locum tenens* for a curate who was absent. Usually the church was empty, and he likened himself to a voice crying in the wilderness. In the village nearly everybody was dependent upon parochial relief. The most highly-remunerated labourer in the place had not 10s. a week; and one man with a wife and four children received only 6s. a week, while a girl earned by spinning 4s. a month. "Idleness, disease, and immorality were

rife, and, as an incentive to profitable industry, a young farmer beat a sickly labourer within an inch of his life." The Beaches were very high-principled and well-meaning people, who set about the reform of the village in good earnest. They took such a fancy to the curate that they appointed him tutor to Michael Beach, grandfather of the present Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, M.P., and thus gave him an opportunity which he did not neglect. He had intended to take his pupil to Weimar, but as, just at the moment, Germany became the scene of war, the plan was changed, and they went to Edinburgh, where so many laurels were to be won subsequently. The modern Athens was at that time in its glory. In the University Dugald Stewart was professor of Moral Philosophy; John Playfair, of Mathematics; John Hill, of Humanity. At the Bar were such distinguished men as Francis Jeffrey, Francis Horner, Henry Brougham, and Walter Scott. It was in the year 1800 that Sydney Smith got married. He had been engaged quite young to Miss Pybus, a girl of some fortune, which was a good thing, since her husband's total wealth consisted of six silver spoons, which he flung into her lap, saying, "There, Kate, you lucky girl, I give you all my fortune." Mrs. Smith sold her pearl necklace for £500, and provided the new house in George Street with plate and linen out of the proceeds. But, of course, the most interesting point in connection with Sydney Smith's sojourn in the Northern capital was the establishing of the *Edinburgh Review*, the first number of which he edited. His well-known saying, though often previously quoted, is worth giving again. The motto he proposed for the review was, "Tenui musa, meditatur avena"—"We cultivate literature on a little oatmeal." But this was too literally true for him and his coadjutors to adopt. As an appendix, Mr. Russell gives a complete list of Sydney Smith's articles in the *Edinburgh*. Some sixty-five of these were reprinted afterwards in his book. Most people, we think, will hasten over the elaborate study of the early works of Smith, and get to the chapter in which his characteristics are discussed. The description of his appearance is vivid:

"He had a long and slightly aquiline nose, of the type which gives a peculiar trenchancy to the countenance; a strongly-developed chin, thick white hair, and black eyebrows. His complexion was fresh, inclining to be florid. In figure he was, to use his own phrase, 'of the family of Falstaff.' Ticknor described him as 'corpulent, but not gross.' Macaulay spoke of his

'rector-like amplitude and rubicundity.' He was of middle height, rather above it than below, and sturdily built. He used to quote a saying from one of his contemporaries at Oxford: 'Sydney, your sense, wit, and clumsiness always gives me the idea of an Athenian carter.'

In dress he was somewhat slovenly. According to his daughter, "his neckcloth always looked like a pudding tied round his throat, and the arrangement of his garments seemed more the result of accident than design." In his bearing to society he was cordial and unrestrained to the point of becoming boisterous at times. The quality of his humour is pretty well known nowadays. Macaulay referred to his "rapid, loud, laughing utterance," and adds: "Sydney talks from the impulse of the moment, and his fun is quite inexhaustible." Perhaps the one fault that could be urged against him, and Mr. Russell does not blink it, is that there was a certain coarseness in his wit. He would scarcely be called a gentleman nowadays who complimented two ladies, called respectively Mrs. Tighe and Mrs. Cuffe, as "the cuff that everyone would wear, the tie that no one would loose." When the Hollands were staying with him, he said "My house is as full of Hollands as a gin shop." When a lady asked him for an epitaph on her pet dog Spot, he proposed "Out, damned Spot!" but afterwards regretted that "she did not think it sentimental enough." When William Cavendish, who had been Second Wrangler, married Lady Blanche Howard, Sydney wrote, "Euclid leads Blanche to the altar—a strange choice for him, as she has not an angle about her." But these were his most refined jests. In describing the manners of a neighbour, he said "she was as cold as if she were in the last stage of blue cholera." His jokes about skin disease in Scotland are extremely "odorous." He compared the use of humour in controversy to "the small tooth-comb of domestic life." Out of all the elements available it is no easy matter to construct a Sydney Smith who will answer to the requirements of the circumstances he is placed in. At bottom we are quite sure he had little of the buffoon or even of the habitual jester about him, but, on the contrary, a grave seriousness and an earnest desire to make what mark he could upon the ills of this world. But, on the other hand, our eulogy stops far short of that which is so freely bestowed upon him by his admirers. The coarseness we have described only emphasises the fact that he had not the mind to sympathise with what was really fine and delicate in life or literature. He was but a hewer of wood and drawer of water, and did not belong to the band of the elect among his own contemporaries. If, as is often enough contended, Macaulay himself was something of a Philistine, much more so was Sydney Smith. The eminently human humours of Elia stand on a level altogether different from and higher than any of his witticisms. In Lamb we have imagination, sympathy, and a hundred other human qualities, helping to make the humour that was so delightful when it was expressed. In Sydney Smith we have but a keen hard intellect, that discerned at a glance the weakness of anyone with whom he came in contact. Even the very polite and complimentary witticisms which he could always bring out to women, owed half the amusement they gave to their obvious and unconcealed insincerity. Sydney Smith, we are afraid, will not hold in the years to come the position that he earned for himself in the glorious beginning of the nineteenth century.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

LOOKING BACK ON WINTER.

UNTIL May has arrived it is seldom safe to speak of an English winter in the past tense; but so far as this year has gone we seem to have good reason to congratulate Nature at large and ourselves in particular upon having got through the season of frost and snow with so little damage or distress. There may not have been so many premature occurrences as in previous years to be recorded as "evidence of the abnormal mildness of the season," for we have had enough brief spells of skating weather at reasonable intervals to teach Nature the wisdom of hastening slowly. So there have been fewer midwinter butterflies, perhaps, than usual; and one has had no opportunity of mixing pear blossom with the Christmas decorations. Nor have the lilacs and laburnums been absurdly tufted with green as in some recent winters.

A FORWARD FEBRUARY.

But the beginning of February has found things in general quite "forward" enough. Primroses were gathered even on the "bleak" coast of East Yorkshire during the first week of the year; and at the same time in Devonshire the lesser celandine, usually one of the surest heralds of coming spring, was found in bloom. From the South Coast, too, came news in early January of wrens' and blackbirds' nests with eggs in them; while even in Norfolk before the month was out the sparrows were manifestly collecting dead grass and straws for nest-building. In the sheltered woodland last year's fern fronds stand fresh and green, while the stiff branches of some elders are tufted at the tips with green, and the slender twining strands of honeysuckle are dotted with new green leaves at even intervals throughout their length. Chilly as the wind outside may have been, there has been little in the woodland in February's opening days to suggest that winter might yet return.

PAIRED PARTRIDGES AND TITS.

Bird life in general shows, too, that the season marches. Very rarely since the end of January has one seen anything like a covey of partridges, for most of the brown birds had paired before the shooting season ended, except in cases where rivalry continued, and noisy parties of three or four were still settling their love affairs at the top of their voices all day long. Almost more conspicuously paired for the season than the partridges are the blue tits, for the characteristic thoroughness of this little mite impels him to be advertising the fact that he has a wife during every minute of the day. You cannot help noticing what is going on when two little blue birds which are never till keep popping about scarcely a yard apart and play follow-my-leader from twig to twig through every tree they come to.

BLACKBIRD DIPLOMACY.

A similar game of follow-my-leader, though with different meanings, is being played in the shrubberies by the cock blackbirds, who seem to take days to settle the question of their respective nesting-sites by pursuing each other alternately over every foot of the disputed ground until they somehow arrive at an understanding as to the frontier-lines where the pursued has no right to become the pursuer. They engage in brief conflict sometime of course, but the result generally seems to be a mutual discovery that they are evenly matched, so they resume their diplomatic manoeuvring until weariness overtakes them; but some time next month—or later if cold weather intervenes—we shall discover that they both have nests, and upon which their respective wives are sitting, in the disputed shrubbery.

GATHERINGS OF MIGRANTS.

In the open fields the most marked sign of the times is the gathering again of the flocks of common winter migrants in readiness for departure. As with the swallows in early autumn these bird-travellers seem to find more comfort in each other's company as the time of their departure draws near. It is, no doubt, the instinctive habit of ages which inspires this social spirit at such times. Although each bird individually feels the impulse to migrate growing within him at the proper time, and, even in solitude, would recognise the propitious moment when the time has come and the wind is fair, still there is safety in numbers, and when all are going in the same direction it is best to go with the crowd. You may see the same principle working among human beings in the gathering or dispersal of a great assembly. Almost unconsciously everyone "goes with the crowd," with the result that everyone duly arrives at the place of meeting, and afterwards finds the proper exit. The only difference is that when we go with the majority we do it of deliberate purpose, whereas the birds have merely a gregarious impulse, inherited from ancestors who have always travelled safely in company with many of their kind. So when, in February, we see again the fieldfares and redwings collected into flocks in the fields, reminding us of the manner of their arrival, we know that they are beginning to feel the impulse to migrate.

BIRDS ON THE MOVE.

Another sign of the times is the reappearance of rare birds and birds in unusual places. Now, for instance, snipe may be frequently flushed from ditches where none have been seen since mid-autumn; and teal, widgeon, and mallard are all wandering in unaccustomed places. They are restless because home-sickness is growing upon them, and they wander, usually with new-won mates, to quiet places apart, awaiting the summons of the wind which will call them home. And far away in the South other birds, which will make their summer homes with us again, are doubtless gathering and wandering in the same way. Indeed, from Devonshire already we hear of chaff-chaffs on the move; and there is generally good reason for the words which tradition in the South puts to the chaffinch's February song, "In a week or two we'll see the wheatear."

THE MOLE QUESTION.

A reader asks me how he can quickly get rid of the moles which are disfiguring his paddock, and, at the same time, he wants to know whether the moles do harm or good to grassland. To get rid of moles, the best plan is to employ a professional mole-catcher, paying him by results. Setting traps in the runs seems easy enough in theory, but there is a great deal of fieldcraft involved in the art of setting them so that they will catch moles, and the price at which the mole-catcher sells his services is low. With regard to the question whether moles do harm or good, great difference of opinion exists between men who have studied the matter, and I can only give my own opinion, which is against the mole. It is said that he ventilates and drains the soil, bringing fresh earth to the surface, and that he kills immense numbers of worms. That the latter is true there can be no doubt; but, if it is meritorious in the mole to bring fresh earth to the surface, and to ventilate and drain it with his tunnels, how can we also praise him for destroying multitudes of worms, which are always at work in the same direction? Indeed, with regard to worms, most of us occupy an illogical position, admitting on one hand the good which they do, and on the other always accounting it a merit in bird or any other creature that it "kills worms."

ENCOURAGING THE WEEDS.

But, leaving the worms out of the calculation, I have frequently examined the work done by moles in a pasture, and I believe that it is distinctly injurious. With his powerful forefeet the mole in passing through the soil rends the fibrous roots of the grass, and the earth of the molehill is often full of such broken fibres. This would matter less if the stouter roots of the weeds which grow in pastures did not suffer much less; but I believe that the immediate effect of the mole's work, especially in the early year, is to give the weeds an advantage over the grass along the lines of his tunnels. The heaps of earth cast up by the mole, moreover, have the effect of smothering the grass more than the weeds; and only the other day I was looking at a number of molehills through which the leaves of buttercups were sprouting vigorously, though there was no sign of a blade of grass. By encouraging injurious weeds, therefore, I think that the mole does more harm to a pasture than his alleged services in ventilating the soil and killing worms can atone for. This, however, is only my own opinion, which can hardly deserve weight, if at all, as that of a man whose sympathy is naturally of the side of the mole, as an interesting wild animal.

E. K. R.

DUCK-SHOOTING FROM AVON GAZES, BISTERNE.

THE second of the COUNTRY LIFE volumes on "Shooting" contained a very interesting account of a form of sport little known to the general public, but common on some large estates bordering the river Avon, formerly the western boundary of the New Forest. It is known as duck-shooting from the Avon "gazes," and in the chapter written by Mr. Reginald Hargreaves the method was described in considerable detail. The Avon is one of the finest, as well as one of the most beautiful, of Southern rivers. There is not a mile on its course, from above Salisbury downwards to the harbour at Christchurch, which is not full of charm. In the lower course of the river it is of very considerable width, and holds a large volume of water; nor will it be forgotten that the Avon salmon are among the most famous products of this stream. The size and flavour are alike remarkable. A 45lb. fish was taken at Bisterne last May, which was the second largest caught with a rod and line in the British Islands in that season. Unfortunately, the fish are also rare, a scarcity due, perhaps, to the number of pike in the water, and their ravages among the smolts both when up the stream and when descending. The necessity for keeping the river quiet for the duck-shooting makes it difficult to deal with the pike.

A great part of the valley is most carefully preserved for wild duck, as well as for other game. Not only the stream itself, but many hundreds of acres of water-meadows, marshes, and pools form admirable haunts for ducks of many kinds,

as well as snipe, coots, and water-hens. These all breed there in increasing numbers, so that during the winter, when joined by other birds passing over, or coming in from the sea to shelter from storms, the valley simply teems with duck. At the same time, without special means for dealing with them, no great number would be shot. A single gun would have little chance, even if he could approach them, and several

guns would possibly achieve little more were not precautions taken to give them a fair chance as against the wary ducks, which have a natural tendency to move off altogether after a few shots have been fired. It is here that the gazes come into play, both on the Hampshire Avon and on the Stour, which joins it at Christchurch.

Mr. Hargreaves writes: "A portion of the river bank, say from 200yds. to 600yds. long, which is known to be a favourite haunt of the duck, is screened by putting up a high post and rail fence a few feet from the bank, and filling it in with green boughs, such as gorse or rhododendron, till quite impervious. In this the gazes, which are similar to grouse-driving boxes, are made, so that you can get into them without being seen by any fowl that are on the water. Unless the gazes are a considerable distance apart they should be on the same side of the river, otherwise the shooting would be hampered. If there are willows growing beside the gazes they must be carefully trimmed, so that a clear space is left in front, but a good deal of covert should be left at the sides, or the ducks will see you as they fly up and down stream." Eight hundred



W. A. Rouch.

STARTING FOR THE RIVER.

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DUCKS RISING.

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ducks have been killed in four days' shooting from the Avon gazes. At Avon Tyrrell, Lord Manners's place, where is the ford where Sir Walter Tyrrell is said to have crossed the river after the murder of William Rufus, "One of the guns went into the lowest gaze with 100 cartridges. In a very short time he had fired them all away, knocking down over sixty ducks, and then had to stand in his gaze for half-an-hour with two empty guns, and swarms of ducks flying all round him." Some years ago the owner of Bisterne, with an eight-bore and a twelve-bore, in floodtime, killed 130 fowl to his own gun in a day, remaining the whole day in the same gaze. Mr. John Mills, whose father, the Rev. Cecil Mills, is now the proprietor of Bisterne, kindly allowed the accompanying photographs to be taken of shooting from the gazes in January. He has also supplied some notes on the method and results of the sport on that beautiful length of the river. Bisterne is three miles from Ringwood, other properties near where ducks more especially

around lower down the stream being those of Lord Manners at Avon Tyrrell, and of Lord Malmesbury at Heron Court on the Stour. At Bisterne there is a series of gazes lining the banks, forming a screen in which are small boxes, just large enough to hold a gun and his loader conveniently. The guns do not walk near the river to take their places, but go in a body at a considerable distance away from it, though parallel to the stream. Arrived opposite to the first set of gazes, a time is given, before which no one is to fire, whatever happens. The guns then separate, and each goes down to a mark put up at 55yds. from each box. Each



W. A. Kouch CROSSING TO THE KEEPER'S COTTAGE FOR LUNCH.

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gun, when he reaches the mark, stays there until exactly one minute to the time agreed upon. Then he and his loader slip silently into position, going straight down to the box, and he begins shooting immediately. Mr. Mills always takes the lowest gaze in each beat, and when the shooting is over works up the river, having keepers and many dogs on each side to pick up the dead, wounded, and crippled ducks. A move is made to the next set of gazes up the river, and then to luncheon (the scene of the guns being punted over to luncheon is among the illustrations). After luncheon the party go to the bottom gazes again, and after shooting them



W. A. Kouch.

DUCKS OVER THE RIVER

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drive a bog for snipe. This snipe-driving seems a peculiarity of Hampshire. It is regularly done at Beaulieu, and with great success as a minor incident in a day's wildfowl-shooting.

The Bisterne bog is of a remarkable kind, as will be seen from the photograph. It is set among pine woods, on one side, and the bright heather-covered ridge beyond dips down almost into the green sedges that precede the wet marsh. The cover is deep and dense, something like that on the edge of Solway Moss at Netherby, and snipe are often found there in great numbers. Sometimes as many as 200 have been seen there in a day. Speaking of the duck-shooting, Mr. Mills says that the upper gazes are far the most productive. "The first time that I shot there this year, two of the guns, the Hon. John Scott-Montagu, M.P., and Mr. J. G. Duplessis, got seventy head of duck and teal together between them at one stand on the upper gazes. A curious incident occurred then. Mr. Scott-Montagu killed a high mallard, which fell and collided with a coot that was flying up stream at the time, and the falling duck broke the coot's back, killing it at once. The best that we have done on the river



W. A. Kouch.

WAITING BEHIND A GAZE.

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was in 1903, when six guns got the following bag :

Wild duck	162
Teal	20
Widgeon	15
Gadwall	...	...	2
Shoveller	...	...	1
Snipe	...	...	10

besides coots, water-hens, and a few rabbits, pheasants, and partridges. The best bag this season (*i.e.*, 1904) to six guns was—

Wild duck	...	...	115
Teal	...	...	47
Widgeon	...	...	6
Shoveller	...	...	3
Pintail	...	...	1
Snipe	...	...	17

with various and extras as given above."

On January 12th, 1905, the day when the photographs were taken, the bag was 49 duck, 25 teal, 3 widgeon, 2 gadwall, 2 snipe, with partridges, pheasants, coots, water-hens, rabbits, and hares. The weather makes a very great difference in the bag. Wildfowl always know where there is shelter and quiet, even when they do not need it. But a heavy storm and gales on days when ordinary shooting would be out of the question are



W. A. Rouch.

ALONG THE RIVER-SIDE.

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same. Some of the earliest eggs from the nests of ducks that remain to breed on the commons close by are gathered. These ducks then lay, and hatch off a second brood by themselves. There are so many wild ducks about that it is impossible



W. A. Rouch.

ON THE SNIPE BOG.

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the very best for duck along the Avon. They then come in for quiet and shelter, and are also less inclined to leave when shot at. Only a few wild duck are reared at Bisterne, and those in a way to improve the shooting without in any degree making it

before long to distinguish the reared ducks from those which are absolutely wild, and which they have joined in their daily life and habits. If the shoot takes place in very cold weather, long poles with prongs on the ends are used to gather the ducks out

of the water and save the dogs from injury by cold or ice. There are almost always large flocks of widgeon on the river, but these are the hardest ducks to make a bag of. Besides being very wild and liable to be flushed before the shooting begins, they always get up to a great height, and go right away so soon as shots are fired. The teal are generally the most considerate in keeping to the line of the river.

Two facts which will strike most readers in these interesting notes are the great variety in the number of the duck and fowl now on the Avon, and the possibility of obtaining somewhat similar shooting on other rivers. This latter has been urged more than once in these pages. The facts and figures here given will enhance the wish that it could be done, and often "where there's a will there's a way." The great necessity is that those attempting to do so should either control both banks of a good river for several miles, or should arrange with their neighbours above and below to make common cause in doing so. There is



W. A. Rouch.

SULTAN RETRIEVES FROM THE RIVER.

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such a natural increase in really wild duck of various kinds in many parts of England, and the laws for their protection are so generally enforced, that now seems an admirable time to make a beginning. Possibly some reader may have already made the experiment?

Without referring to old records it is difficult to judge whether the variety of fowl found on the Avon to-day is greater than it was thirty years ago. But it seems very probable that private preservation and bird protection by law have done this. Besides the many species noted in the lists of particular days' shooting given in this article, pochards, tufted duck, golden eye, goosander, and smew have been shot in recent years. The shoveller, one of the prettiest of the wild ducks, seems to be extending its range very much, while the tufted duck may be seen everywhere, including the waters of London reservoirs.

FROM THE FARMS.

THE INFLUENCE OF MILLING ON
AGRICULTURE.

THE English farmer, especially the stock-keeper, cannot but be pleased to note the further increase during the past twelve months in the output of the British and Irish flour mills; and when the present position of the grain trade is taken into account, in connection therewith, the British wheat-grower must have a certain feeling of satisfaction. For as the time is rapidly approaching when the United States will consume all the wheat grown there, there must be a greater demand for English wheat in this country, inasmuch as the sources of supply do not produce a class of wheat similar to America; and so the British miller will require help from the English farmer in the shape of a flavouring and mellow wheat to take off the harshness of the other grain ground into flour.

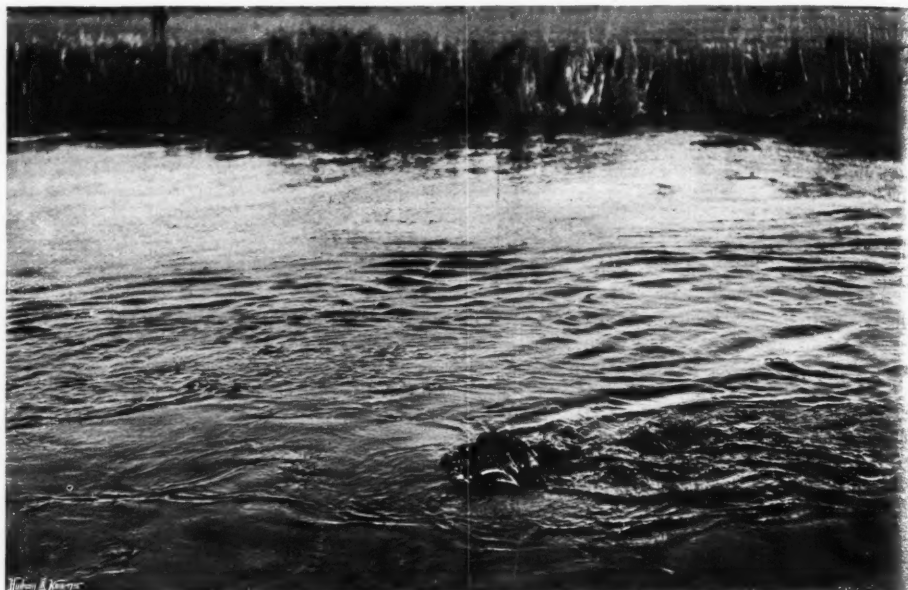
As regards the output of flour from the British and Irish mills in the year 1904, we are pleased to record that 33,312,000 sacks of flour were manufactured, notwithstanding the fact that the English farmers were only able to supply the millers with about 5,300,000qr. of home-grown wheat, and most of that of very inferior quality, due to the bad harvest weather of 1903. Therefore, from abroad it was necessary to import 22,823,000qr. of foreign wheat, in order to make up the total of flour given above, which beats all previous records as regards flour output from English mills in any one year. In connection with the imports of foreign wheat, 1904 will stand out in the history of flour-milling from the fact that the United States of America, an important source of our breadstuff supply, fell from the principal position to the fifth place in the list of countries that send wheat for our millers to grind; but, fortunately for Great Britain, other countries had some surplus wheat to send us to make up the deficiency of the United States, and in this connection it is gratifying to notice the part played by our Colonies. In the twelve months ending December 31st, 1904, the amount of wheat imported from abroad was 22,823,000qr., of which quantity the United States forwarded only a little over 7 per cent., Russia 24 per cent., Argentina nearly 22 per cent., India 26 per cent., Australia 10½ per cent., and Canada 6 per cent. The following table shows at a glance the decline in the supply from the United States during the past three years, the rapid advance made by Russia towards the position she held some ten years ago, when from this source we imported for the purpose of grinding it into flour in our mills 36 per cent. of the total wheat coming from abroad, and the steady advance of India as a source of our wheat supply:

TOTAL FOREIGN WHEAT GROUND IN BRITISH MILLS IN 1904, 1903, 1902, AND 1901—PROPORTION SENT BY PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES.

Year.	Wheat Imported, Or.	U.S.A. Per cent.	Russia, Per cent.	Argentina, Per cent.	India, Per cent.	Canada, Per cent.
1904 ...	22,823,173	7'24	24	21'9	26	6'3
1903 ...	20,563,814	27'45	19'48	16'02	19'35	12'25
1902 ...	18,900,520	53'47	8'07	5'32	10'91	11'76
1901 ...	16,265,323	58'00	3'6	11'6	5'00	9'5

When one looks at the above table and takes note of the kind of wheat that is now being imported from abroad, it can be at once understood how welcome would be to the British millers a good supply of English wheat to mellow down the harsh wheats that come from India, and to give flavour to the wheat

from the river Plate. English farmers, therefore, should be able to secure a good market for their wheats in the immediate future, and especially should they grow wheat when they note the quantity coming from abroad. Now, we are told by the Board of Agriculture that last harvest we only produced 4,610,000qr. of wheat, whereas a few years ago, comparatively speaking, this country grew from 12,000,000qr. to 16,000,000qr. of wheat. Now, as regards the importance to our English farmers of



W. A. Rouch.

HARD WORK IN THE STRONG STREAM.

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the increased output of flour from the mills of this country, even if they supply such a small percentage of the raw material—not quite one-fifth of the total ground into flour in this country—in the first place, the greater the amount of wheaten flour made in British mills the larger is the supply of good wholesome cattle food in the shape of millers' offals, which increase on this market means a considerable saving to the English farmer, not only as regards its feeding value, but in depreciating the prices of other cattle foods, to the advantage of the feeder. The British and Irish mills, in 1904, were able to place on the markets some 1,874,146 tons of offal in the shape of middlings, sharps, pollard, and bran, and this large amount of valuable foodstuffs, when their value as a meat producer is taken into account, was purchased by the farmers at a most reasonable figure. In 1903 the amount of millers' offals sold equalled about 1,578,964 tons.

English agriculture is so closely allied to British flour-milling, that it would be incorrect to close this article without reference to the amount of foreign flour imported from abroad, and the quantity that each principal country sends to these shores, for these statistics will not only give the reader some idea of the extent of foreign competition our millers have to meet, but will also show the loss that our stock-keepers suffer by the flour entering this country in a manufactured form, as the millers' offals are retained for feeding purposes at the spot where the flour is manufactured, and only come to this country in the form of beef or other meat, thus making the competition in our meat market still more keen. Taking the past four years' imports of foreign flour, we see no great alteration in the sources from which this country is supplied, although the total imports each year distinctly show the advantage the home millers have over their foreign rivals by the consumption of breadstuffs in the United States almost coming up to production:

TOTAL FLOUR IMPORTED IN 1904, 1903, 1902, AND 1901—PROPORTION SENT BY PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES.

Year.	Flour imported, Sacks.	U.S.A. Per cent.	Canada, Per cent.	Austria, Per cent.	France, Per cent.
1904 ...	5,889,157	56'00	13'80	4'90	10'00
1903 ...	8,240,476	78'74	12'80	3'97	2'77
1902 ...	7,754,536	80'40	10'00	3'50	3'70
1901 ...	9,030,572	84'30	6'00	3'50	2'70

We have here a remarkable falling off of American competition, while the French millers are making headway on our market, and we may yet hear the cry in this country of the severe competition from that quarter, as was the case some years ago. But there still remains the fact that at the present time our farmers, for the good of old England, should give, wherever possible, the preference to the cultivation of wheat, not only because our millers require it in their mixture in order to make good flour from the wheats now arriving on the market, but also because our sources of supply have shifted to a much greater distance from our shores, a fact which increases the national peril in case of war.

R. W. D.

THE LAMBING SEASON.

The mild weather of the last few days has turned out very favourable to the lambing season, and flockmasters, on the whole, are very well satisfied, although reports continue to show that the number of twins dropped is proportionately small. From several flocks, also, we hear that the lambs are, if not exactly under-sized, at any rate not quite so robust as might be wished. On most farms there is, luckily, a good supply of roots, and these, with the ordinary forage and kohl rabi, are getting the Hampshires through all right till the grass comes. Of course, it is very early days yet to speak of the season, since only in a comparatively small number of flocks has lambing proceeded to any great extent. Yet perhaps enough has occurred to show what is likely to be the character of the year. Neither the rams nor the ewes did very well in 1904, and, though they are being helped out by the good weather, they are not likely to produce anything extraordinary in the way of results during the present year.

LIGHTS ON FARM-CARTS.

There has been a considerable disputation going on in regard to a meditated Act of Parliament enforcing the use of lights on farm-carts, one hour before sunrise and one hour after sunset. There is a division of opinion. The Scottish Central Chamber of Agriculture were opposed unanimously to the measure, but the Fifehire Society took an exactly contrary view under the direction of Captain Gilmour, who pointed out that the precaution would be better both for horses and carts. We are rather inclined to agree with him, but at the same time it is approaching petty interference when the Government of the country insists on lights being carried while ordinary farmwork is performed. Going to and from a station, or doing ordinary traffic, farm-carts are, of course, simply in the position of other highway vehicles, and obliged to conform to the regulations affecting them, but at home the case is different. Lights are insisted upon on the highways as a protection for other travellers, but

woods and hedgerows are so well worth exploring for the early signs of dawning life that never let us forget that ceaselessly, secretly, surely trees and shrubs and plants are preparing for their summer glory, that we have no time to be dull. I say, never let us forget, for even before the leaves fell last year one could detect the tiny bud of this year's leaf. There has been no pause, no single minute of the year when life stood still. In the country there is no "winter of our discontent," for whenever we feel the least little bit down-hearted we can go and learn courage and hope in garden and wood and field.

It is hard to say which are the most beautiful, the days of pale blue skies and gleaming winter sunshine, with a landscape painted in tender hues of green and brown, the distance veiled in soft mysterious haze, or the still grey days of smoked pearl cloud when the Broad lies like a dark mirror, reflecting old gold reeds and groups of birches, its smooth surface broken now and then by a water-hen, leaving two lengthening silver streaks behind it as it swims.

There, again, is one of the special joys of this early season of the year. Now that the trees are so completely leafless and the brushwood and clumps of reeds are thin, birds and beasts are easily seen. Here are dainty little water-hens as nimble on land as in the water, uttering their strange croak and flitting their tails to show off the white feathers, and rooks in large parties searching for food on land freshly ploughed, which the farmer is preparing for his barley or root crops, for the wheat has been in bed these many weeks and is now beginning to throw a delicate green shimmer over the warm brown earth like a gauze veil. Here, too, the Royston crow with clumsy grey body and black wings is busy. Now is the time to study the titmice. Pert little blue tits, great tits, and cole-tits, and most charming of all the marsh-tits jauntily wearing their black velvet skull-caps, come boldly up to perch on and feed from cocoanuts and lumps of fat hung in convenient places. The beautiful nuthatch with his dull red breast and handsome blue-grey coat will also come close to the house in search of tempting filberts, which he carries off to wedge in a convenient cleft in a tree, where he will smash the shell with his powerful beak. Or, better still, the nuts may be ready wedged into an ingenious little frame with openings just large enough to admit of the passage of the kernel, but too small for the outer shell, compelling the nuthatch to crack his nut where he finds it, while the observer, who must be neither seen nor heard, may easily watch the whole performance. Still more beautiful in colour are the lullfinches, always to be seen in pairs,



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A PEDIGREE SOW AND HER LITTER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

the measure in contemplation seemed to have for its object to make the farmers protect themselves and their goods and chattels.

JANUARY DAYS IN BROAD-LAND.

WHEN I make an expedition to the neighbouring town at this season of the year for a few hours' shopping, or to visit my friends, I am generally greeted with such remarks and questions as, "I suppose the country is dreadfully dismal just now?" or, "How is your garden looking—very dreary I expect? This is surely the dull season of the year!" I can only exclaim in return, "Dismal! Dull! Indeed, in the country it is not so!" In the country we forget there are such words; it is only the town that appears to country visitors dull, with its foggy atmosphere, gloomy houses of damp, dirty bricks, and the trees, such as they are, looking black and lifeless. In the country there is so much to watch and search for; the

hunting in the shrubberies for last year's seeds of various kinds, their gay breasts showing up against the dark boughs of yew or pine. Chaffinches and robins are none the less dear to us for being more often seen, and the wren seems tinier and more fairylike than ever, hopping and fluttering among bare branches. Out in the lanes the most conspicuous of our bird friends is the yellow-hammer and his habit of taking short flights along the hedges, and then waiting till one has almost caught him up, shows off his bright plumage to perfection. Now, too, one may catch a glimpse of a kingfisher. Indeed, he is too often seen by the sharp-eyed villagers, and, sad to say, I know of a glass case, in a cottage close by, containing no less than six or eight stuffed specimens of this beautiful creature, all shot by the young carpenter who owns them; for here every young man has a gun, and may be met with at sundown, standing silently under the shadow of a hedge or on a little patch of common ground, waiting for the triangular-shaped parties of wild duck crossing, with hurried flight, to the Broad from the sea.

A walk in the woods is particularly delightful just now. Now the beech trees are to be seen to great advantage, their broad, spreading branches, with the peculiarly elegant curve of the twigs, each tipped by its slender bronze bud, weaving intricate tracery against the sky. Early as it is, the buds on the limes are tinged with crimson, and the birches and hazels are

hanging out their catkins like tight little roly-polies now, not the pretty, graceful tassels that we shall see later on.

If I walk quietly, it will be strange if I do not see two or more squirrels vaulting from bough to bough, playing, or perhaps squabbling, with each other, flourishing their plumed tails, and breaking out into cross little quarrelsome chatterings when they discover the intruder gazing up at them. Or perhaps I shall start a pheasant in his gorgeous winter plumage, who waits till I almost tread on him, and then struts off, not in such a very great hurry, just as if he knew the risk of being shot was nearly at an end for this season.

What a beautiful carpet there is in the wood! Golden-brown bracken, embroidered with twisted sprays of honeysuckle showing forth pairs of tiny young leaves, and trails of bramble bearing last year's foliage green as if it were summer, not crimson and brown like the brambles in the lane. The honeysuckle is not alone in showing young leaves; already the primroses are thrusting sturdy green blades up through the thick wet grass, and in the garden *Ribes sanguineum* bears big buds almost ready to burst.

It is too early yet for the true spring flowers in this easterly region, though, no doubt, further south pale snowdrops and stout little aconites with green frills round their baby faces are beginning to appear. I can only find a very few wallflowers in the south border, while hard by glows the anemone fulgens, its radiant scarlet stars vying with the berries still thickly clustered on the holly bushes, refuting again, as so often before, the old saying that an abundance of berries foretells a hard winter. But though our real spring flowers delay to come, a few summer friends seem to have mistaken the season, and are holding up shy little blossoms to the January skies. A deep red stock in full bloom stands close to some crimson spikes of *schizostylis coccinea*, which the garden books tell us must be protected from inclement weather; the aubrietia is tinged with purple, and the China rose hangs fragile pink blossoms against the grey flint walls of the house, while in the rose-bed there are buds on the bushes, as many as seven on one bush, and even on the grassy slopes of the lawn I have found some hawkbit and a dandelion.

How can our town cousins call this the dullest season of the year when there is such endless variety all around us? Day follows day, each one different, and with its own special characteristics. One perhaps is grey and still, and on the next the wind rises and blows the clouds away, and the sun shines all day since the time when it rose in a warm pink glow behind the screen of trees, massed in deep brown shadow on the other side of the broad. Gradually it peered over their tops, first tipping the dancing wavelets with points of light, and then flooding the whole surface of the water with pale liquid fire.

In the afternoon of such a day the fresh air and dry roads are inviting for a walk, to meet the buoyant westerly breeze, towards the marshes. There they stretch, level and spacious, the grass waving in the wind, crossed by broad brimming ditches gleaming in the sun, dotted with stacks of brown marsh hay or a group of rough-coated horses turned out for the winter. In the distance there are windmills with white sails turning, turning; still further, beyond the river on a slight eminence, is the dim, grey form of a noble church; and so the eye travels on to the horizon.

"Where earth's green steals into heaven's own hue,
Far, far away."

As early as four o'clock the sun will be dropping down the sky, and it will be time to turn regretfully away. But the regret will only be for a moment, for growing at the edge of the marsh are groups of birches with shining white trunks, their massed bare twigs making a dim purple glow against the heavy green needles and red-brown branches of the Scotch firs. Beyond lie the peaceful ploughed fields, "like deep folds of a mantle of russet velvet," each furrow catching the light of the low sun; and then homewards, past tufts of yellow gorse brightening the hedgerows and clumps of ivy covered with berries, till just before darkness falls the shining Broad comes in sight again. And so ends a beautiful January day.

GALLINULA CHLOROPUS.

GREEN-KEEPING.

HAVING now served for over seventeen years as a golf green-keeper on both seaside and inland greens, perhaps the following article will give some idea of the methods I employ to keep the putting greens in good playing condition. The grass on a putting green should be as close and firm as possible, and on inland greens the trouble is to get it worked up to the proper texture. To get it into this condition I use a mixture of seasand and charcoal, and the best time to put this preparation on is from the middle of September to the end of October.

The way I work it is this. I put on a little of both, choosing a fine dry day, as the dryer you put mixture on the better. I then rub the two in with the back of a garden-rake, and as soon as I have it all out of sight I put on another coating, and perhaps a third, if I think it is necessary. Besides toning down the grass it keeps the surface dry and firm, and lets the air get at the roots, so that there is less risk when using the roller of choking and killing out the finer grasses.

I never roll my greens in wet weather, many a good putting green has been ruined by being rolled when the surface was too wet. I wait till the top is dry, and then give it a light roll; but before doing so I brush the green all over to remove any worm-casts or other matter that may be on it. I never roll in worm-casts; I have them carefully swept off and taken away, as my work in fining down the grass would be absolutely thrown away if they were left on, as the grass would come away again as coarse as before. I find the best roller to use is a wooden one, weighing about 14 cwt., that is, for everyday use. Once a week

I give each green one turn all over with an iron one, weighing about 4 cwt. I do not believe in too much rolling, especially with too heavy a roller.

In the winter, during very bad weather, I make it a point to have the hole so placed on the putting green that there is a very short distance to walk over the green after the player has holed out to get to the next tee, so that the greater part of the green is practically getting a rest. In very hard frost I take the hole off altogether, as I find frost (and tramping over the grass during hard frost) does a very great deal of harm to the finer grasses.

I am not a great believer in artificial manures, and I use very little of them. When I think a green requires some help in this way I give it a coating of good old rotted manure, well mixed with loam, and perhaps a little lime. I find this has a lasting effect on the grass, and I think it does the grass more good than the artificial—at least, that is my experience, and I have tried both. I cut the grass on my greens as low and short as I can, and I leave the cut grass on because I find it acts as a manure and helps to nourish, and, at the same time, thicken out the grass plants. In the summer I cut my greens every day. I do not believe in letting the grass get too long, as it makes it difficult to play on, and, at the same time, softens the blade; but, of course, if the weather should be very dry I do not cut so often, as there is not so much growth then.

Now there is one thing green-keepers on inland courses have to contend with—more so than green-keepers on seaside courses—that is, worms in the putting greens. Opinions differ as to the desirability of getting rid of them; some contend that if you kill the worms out you will kill your grass at the same time. My own candid opinion is that they should be killed out (at least, the majority of them), and my reasons are these: First, on the putting greens you must have a nice smooth, firm surface, free from obstacles of every kind. Now, where you have worms it is impossible to have this, and the ball being always on the ground, if there are any casts in the line of the putt the ball picks them up. The result is that the ball is put out of its true run, no matter how true it was put on by the player. My second reason is that it is an impossibility to have a fine firm sward of turf where you have worms. On a putting green where you have to sweep and roll it every day, you gradually kill out all the finer grasses and leave the coarse. The result is that you have in a very short time a green patchy, lumpy, and not worth playing on.

There is no doubt that the worms multiply much more quickly on the greens than on any other part of the course, so that in a few years where you had only a few worms you come to have thousands, until it becomes necessary to get rid of some of them, as they have become a nuisance. They are like everything else, you can have too much of them. Then I say kill off some of them. I am speaking from experience, as my greens were very bad, and I set to work with Carter's Worm Eradicator, and I practically took them all out. The result is that my greens at the present time are looking beautiful and healthy, and I have used them in play all the winter through. I have tried a lot of "worm killers," but this one is absolutely the very best and most effective I have ever used, as it does no harm to the grass in the least, but seems to act as a manure. I have taken the worms out of greens before I came here, and I always found the grass improve after it, and never showed the least sign of dying off from the worms being killed out.

I have only to say in conclusion, that to understand the keeping of a golf green properly the green-keeper must know what is wanted; in fact, be a golfer himself, so that he can have everything to please himself, and he will run a good chance of pleasing even the most fastidious member of his club.

PETER W. LEES.

ON THE GREEN.

THERE was rather a curious result of the team match of the first and second divisions of the Press Golfing Society. It was a ten a-side match, under handicap terms, of course, the line of division being that handicaps of thirteen and over put a man into the second division. In the single matches, played in the morning, the longer handicapped players had a distinct advantage, winning by six matches to four; but in the foursomes, played in the afternoon, they did not win a match. The arena was the Walton Heath course, obviously not unduly in favour of the weaker players; but it is singular that they should have a six to four advantage in the singles and not win one of the foursomes. One only was halved. Does the result show that the better players have a better faculty for the associated work of foursome matches? Or have they a relative advantage after luncheon?

Mr. Graham, the Oxford captain, has shown a good appreciation of the merits of inland greens in choosing Sunningdale as the course for the Inter-University match this year. The date is April 26th. It is a pity, no doubt, that the Universities cannot find seaside courses handy on which to settle their differences; but it takes the genius of a Shakespeare to find a seaport in Bohemia, or a seaside links in Cambridgeshire or Oxfordshire, and inland courses, Sunningdale, in spite of too many "blind" shots, is the best, in the estimate of a large number of rational people, and it is within a reasonable range of civilisation. The new Oxford University course at Radley is just about ready, and is to be opened by a match between graduates and undergraduates, so that comparisons of past and present may not be wanting.

There is a certain admirable ingenuity and humour about some of the names for new golf clubs that are produced from time to time. There was wit in Lord Wemyss's name for his new round-bottomed modification of the "baffy" spoon for approaching—"the Unionist," because it did not cleave the kingdom in pieces. It is a little reminiscent of the sinful punster who called his cat "Martini" "because she's no Mauser"; but it is good. And now comes on the market a club destined to be a substitute for a mashie and niblick, and called by the inspired name of "Higgs's Deliverer." Who the original Higgs was who is thus stereotyped in need of deliverance does not appear, for the club is put forth by Aveston of Norwich, who is himself so good a player as to stand in need of little deliverance. In appearance the club is a niblick with its lower edge heavily toothed, like the jawbone of that awful god called "the Devourer" in the Egyptian "Book of the Dead."

The literature of golf is amazing, though perhaps it is not for me to say so, and possibly, too, all that is written about golf is not literature. But these are the words of the cynic. The latest announcement that suggests this remark is that a "Golfer's Year-book" is to make its appearance in May next, and to continue to appear as a hardy May annual until golf shall be played no more, under the joint editorship of Mr. J. L. Low and Mr. Bernard Darwin. The editorship is all right, for what these two do not know about golf is better unknown. There is, it is true, already a *Golfing Annual*, but presumably the partners in this new game look forward to being able to beat it.

A great many people are just now saying how much better it would be if somebody having authority would thoroughly revise and simplify the rules of golf. They even go so far as to say that if the rules were simplified and abridged there would be fewer questions arising as to their meaning. That is a very doubtful proposition, seeing that it is mainly in order to provide for all possibly arising cases that the rules have been brought to their present length and complexity. But the right answer to those who urge a revision is, surely, "Go to work and revise them"; and if they reply in their modesty, "Oh, but we are not people of authority," the answer to that again is that those who are in authority would welcome only too gratefully any revision that was good, no matter how humble the source from which it came. Speaking as a member of the Rules of Golf Committee, I am sure I may say that any suggestions for simplification would be thankfully received. What we are not supremely thankful for is being told repeatedly that the rules ought to be better, clearer, shorter, without anyone ever telling us how this much-to-be-desired improvement can be effected. There are plenty of idle men who might occupy themselves in making an ideal code.

HORACE HUTCHINSON.

CORRESPONDENCE.

FIRE DANGER IN COUNTRY HOUSES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—As a fire assessor of many years' experience (acting invariably in the interests of the assured), I was much struck with the valuable advice offered by your correspondent signing himself "J. C." in your issue dated January 21st. I consider that in publishing such information you are rendering your readers great service. The many serious fires that have recently occurred, and which, unfortunately, are still occurring (resulting in total losses of some of the finest mansions in Great Britain, and their valuable and sometimes priceless contents) could have been minimised, if not altogether prevented, had reasonable precautions been taken. I regard the possession of these historical houses and art treasures, which can never be replaced, as a sacred trust, and that owners are bound to safeguard the valuables with which circumstances have endowed them, not only in the interests of successors, but morally in the interests of the community at large, and that the loss of these fine old homes must be regarded as a national calamity. It must, however, be borne in mind that the possessor of a fine house is not necessarily a man of wealth, and in these times of agricultural depression he does not always feel justified in expending the considerable sum that modern fire appliances necessitate. The good advice now tendered by your correspondent, and in the past by my firm and men of influence in the insurance world, is generally disregarded, and only when a calamity has happened is it given a second thought. Then, indeed, the trouble begins. The first demand of the insurance company (and rightly so) is for a tabulated priced list of the items destroyed, and experience has fully proved that when destruction has taken place it is a matter of absolute impossibility for any owner to prepare a correct list, or to adequately estimate his loss in detail. The immediate business of every owner of valuable property is to have this inventory carefully prepared by valuers of repute, and thus be placed in such a position that a claim cannot be disputed. The cost of this necessary precaution is trifling compared with the installation of proper fire appliances, but in any case it is absolutely essential to the making of a proper claim. Money will not, I know, repay an owner for the loss of the valuable accumulations of perhaps centuries, but he can at least minimise his pecuniary loss. It is of the greatest importance that everyone should carefully read their policies. I have never yet dealt with a claim of any magnitude where I could not have obtained greater compensation had the policy been properly taken out. Seek expert advice on the subject, as it may save you hundreds, nay, thousands of

pounds; particularly look to the limit allowed on any one picture, print, or piece of sculpture. It is often so small that it will astound you, and yet may be increased without extra cost if the policy is altered by anyone who properly understands this work. Finally, I may add that photographs of interiors and exteriors of special note have been to me of the greatest practical assistance in proving a loss. Apologising for the space I have taken—W. ROLAND PECK.

THE KINDLY FRUITS OF THE EARTH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Taking the sense of your correspondent's article on the "kindly" fruits of the earth, I imputed to her the intention of understanding "genial" as the meaning of the word "kindly" in this context. Apparently "natural," "fit," "proper," is the epithet that inspired the article, and to this meaning the latter portion of her essay gives colour. For this purpose she quotes Dr. Johnson, possibly an expert on our Prayer Book and its meaning. She can hardly, however, argue from the Authorised Version of the Bible (1611) backward to 1544. "A. H. T." obviously begs the question when he generalises on the various meanings of "kindly," and refers one "for data to documents in the British Museum, various standard dictionaries, and translations of the Litany in French, Spanish, and Arabic—possibly many other languages—which have appeared from time to time." The point at issue is the meaning of "kindly" in the Litany in our Prayer Book. That it is best rendered by "after their kind," is agreed by Archbishop Trench, "English Past and Present," Canon Daniel in his work on the Prayer Book, and Dr. Barry in "The Teacher's Prayer Book."—N.

WATER-FINDING.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—You may like to know that I found water at a depth of 50ft. in Sussex, on the advice of a dowser, a neighbour about 200yds. away having sunk two wells to a depth of 200ft. or more without such advice without finding water. I was advised to try the spot I did on the information that two underground streams crossed at that point, and the two streams were reached at different levels, it being necessary to go down to the lower one, as the first was not copious enough. A lady friend of mine here has the power of using the wand at places, to her, quite unexpected, though, of course, the existence of water in such places has not been tested. No one who has had experience of a dowser can doubt that certain strong and inexplicable causes do violently perturb a wand held in the hands of a person susceptible to them.—ALFRED WILSON.

A PEEP INTO "VIOLET-LAND."

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—To rush up in a motor, or even by train, to Grasse from Nice or Cannes, to lunch at the restaurant of the Grand Hotel and have tea on the rose-clad terrace, as most people do, is not to see Grasse. To spend even a few days there, and take two or three drives in its environs, is not to know Grasse. To learn the charm of "Violet-land" you must do more than that. You must penetrate into the recesses of its narrow and tortuous streets. You must frequent its mediæval market in the dewy freshness of the early morning. You must take long leisurely rambles amongst its fragrant violet terraces,



A PLEASANT TASK.

climb up into the rocky fastnesses of the grey mountains which shelter it from the cold north winds, and gaze from its red cliffs, clad with evergreen oak, down on the rich valleys below. You must linger and gossip with the old woman at the covered well, with the sturdy peasant following his mule, laden with fragrant pine branches; and, as you do all this, slowly but surely the indefinable charm of Provence will enthral you, and the sunny sweetness of "Violet-land" will call you back year after year with ever-increasing persistency. It is not necessary here to give the ancient history of Grasse from

the times of the Romans to the present day, full as it is both of history and of romance. What we have to do with to-day is its chief industry—its flower perfumery of world-wide renown. To those who are of a chemical turn of mind, a visit to its great manufactories is of exceeding interest; and even to those who understand nothing of distilleries, it is a never-ending marvel to see the layers of blossoms laid on the beds of lard, to be changed day after day as they yield up their perfume for the use of Youth and Beauty. The actual processes through which the blossoms pass seem simple enough to the uninitiated, but the real secret of success seems still to remain with the Provençaux, and even the priceless attar of roses which is there produced is said to excel the far-famed scent of Damascus. But it is not so much of the distilleries themselves that I would speak, as of the growing and picking of the flowers. From March onwards the neighbourhood of Grasse is one large garden. As you walk along the level road which runs along the mountain-side towards Nice you look down on terrace after terrace of olive trees, under whose shade grow rows upon rows of Neapolitan or in some cases "Czar" violets. Day after day you see women and children picking, picking violets by apronfuls, violets by sackfuls, ruthlessly pulling off the purple blossoms, as stalks in this case are of no account. It is an enchanting occupation for a time, but to go on at it hour after hour requires the back of a Provençal and the perseverance of extreme poverty. Little by little one's enthusiasm slackens, and one finds one's self lying back against the stone wall, or leaning on the gnarled trunk of some ancient olive tree, and gazing up into the cloudless depths of blue sky through the silver branches. But violets are not the only attractions of Grasse, though one buries one's face in double handfuls all the springtime. These are succeeded by the jonquils and narcissus. Then the rose season comes. In the early morning the rose-fields are full of pickers and the opening blossoms of the Damask roses, while down in the picking-rooms of Grasse rows of women and girls sit at long tables piled with rose petals and chatter away as they toss aside the yellow centres, and dismember ruthlessly the full-blown roses, Damask and La France alike. Later on orange blossoms have their turn, and great waggons lumber along the dusty road in the grey dawn of morning, laden with their fragrant burden. Sometimes a sack gives way, and a little stream of the thick petals and buds trickles into the road. Then is the time to go and explore the little village of Le Bar, or the romantic valley of Le Loup, beyond Magagnosc, where the shiny orange trees, laden with bloom, stand in serried rows all along the roadside and up the ravine beyond. Later again you will see a cart pass piled up with branches of sweet geranium, or a faggot of tuberose will peep out from behind the huge straw hat of some peasant woman, smelling even sweeter than the jessamine which they have succeeded. But long before that you will have recrossed the Channel, for few, indeed, are those who see Grasse at what seems, to those



FIRM FRIENDS.

who know it well, its best time of all—the end of September or October, when the grape gathering is in full swing, and all the valley below is blushing crimson and gold with the changing hues of the vine leaves. These are only hints of what is to be found in "Violet-land" by those who have learnt to know and love it, to whom the mountain peasants are become familiar friends—independent and canny as Scotch folk, and yet impulsive and demonstrative like their race; no longer speaking, as formerly, of *Vous autres* with shy suspicion, but sharing their hopes and fears, their village gossip, and even their love-letters, with *Les bons voisins*. Of little Jeannet and his sister Amelie, of the tame goat who so reluctantly allowed his portrait to be taken,

of our good neighbours who helped to pick our violets and of we who helped to pick theirs, we could tell more, but will leave the accompanying pictures to tell their own tale instead.—B.

WORSLEY POLLY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Having seen, from time to time, some very interesting photographs of country life in your excellent paper, I thought perhaps you might consider



POLLY.

the one I herewith enclose of sufficient interest to your readers. Polly was a sow of the Earl of Ellesmere's celebrated breed, and belonged to Mrs. Alice Taylor of the Cock Hotel, Worsley, with whom she lived and thrived for nearly sixteen years, having during that period brought into the world over 200 little ones. Some years ago Polly contracted the habit of taking a pint of ale every morning at lunchtime, and in the photograph she may be seen partaking of her daily refreshment. Owing to infirmities and old age, she has been destroyed, and buried in the paddock where she wandered at her own sweet will and spent so many happy days. Mrs. Taylor is about to erect a neat little gravestone to her memory.—JAMES ROSCOE, Worsley.

THE BREAKING OF DOGS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I regret to see that Captain Radclyffe thinks I have taken offence at his remarks. Nothing was farther from my intention. I merely endeavoured to answer his communication: with what success it is for your readers to determine. Captain Radclyffe prefers "to discuss such matters," i.e., matters relating to the breaking of dogs, "privately with a fellow-sportsman, rather than by writing columns in the papers." Here, again, we are thoroughly in accord; but as he made over his remarks to your representative before I put pen to paper, with a view to their appearing in your columns, it is far from easy to reconcile his action with his letter. Captain Radclyffe quotes copiously from languages living and dead. I will not follow him in this direction, the vernacular being, in my opinion, more suitable to the business in hand. Captain Radclyffe "cannot do better than quote extracts from Sir Henry Smith's letter." Surely he might do better than lead your readers to believe that Mr. Shirley's words are mine. Mr. Shirley's name was, and still is, a name to conjure with. In dog-breaking and knowledge of dogs he had no superior. I question if he had an equal. Unlike the "gun-shy" dog, moreover, his perfections—and imperfections, if he had any—were hereditary, and to his opinion I was at all times ready to defer. Captain Radclyffe will pardon me for saying that Mr. Shirley's name should have been kept prominently before your readers. He is good enough to propose a trial on his own shooting, which might end to his satisfaction or mine; but I scarcely think it likely that it would be attended by any considerable number of retriever-owners, in whose interests I addressed you. I hope to be at the Autumn Trials with one or two dogs. Till then I take leave of your columns, and of Captain Radclyffe—in no unfriendly spirit, let me assure him—and I can promise him he will find me in no way averse to the small wager he talks of. I am very glad to see a letter from Mr. Horace Hutchinson touching on the two heads of discourse, "Hard Mouth" and "Gun-shyness." Mr. Hutchinson is a sportsman of great experience, whose views are always entitled to every consideration; and there does not, I am pleased to see, appear to be much between us on either head. Captain Radclyffe counsels giving a puppy "Something to pick up which hurts when it is pinched," such as a rabbit skin plentifully besprinkled with "pins or other sharp-pointed instruments." Mr. Hutchinson sees what might result from such injudicious treatment, and recommends the dummy being constructed "so that the dog may be able to take a good firm hold without feeling the prickles," otherwise he may be made "to mouth his game so gently that it would not be possible for him to retrieve it at a gallop." (The italics are all my own). Mr. Hutchinson says that "gun-shyness is a very relative term, varying from mere timidity to an apparently incurable vice." By reference to my letter of January 14th you will see that here again Mr. Hutchinson and I are practically at one.—HENRY SMITH, Chisholme, Hawick, N.B.